

**THE 1711 EXPEDITION TO QUEBEC: POLITICS AND THE LIMITATIONS
OF GLOBAL STRATEGY IN THE REIGN OF QUEEN ANNE**

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ABSTRACT

To mark the 300th anniversary of the event in question, this thesis analyses the first British attempt to conquer the French colonial city of Quebec. The expedition was a product of the turbulent political environment that was evident towards the end of the reign of Queen Anne. Its failure has consequently proven to be detrimental to the reputations of the expedition's commanders, in particular Rear-Admiral Sir Hovenden Walker who was actually a competent and effective naval officer. True blame should lie with his political master, Secretary of State Henry St John, who ensured the expedition's failure by maintaining absolute control over it because of his obsession with keeping its objective a secret. After recently celebrating a succession of tercentenaries concerning the War of the Spanish Succession, this thesis hopes to draw attention away from the famous military commander, the Duke of Marlborough, and instead focus upon a little known combined operation. The expedition helped to alter British strategy by renewing an interest in 'blue-water' operations that would see huge success later in the century, ultimately resulting in the eventual conquest of French North America in the Seven Years War.

This thesis is dedicated to the memories of my father and grandparents

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1: http://d-maps.com/carte.php?lib=east_coast_of_north_america_map&num_car=1686&lang=en

2: http://d-maps.com/carte.php?lib=quebec_map&num_car=1868&lang=en

3: http://d-maps.com/carte.php?lib=north_east_usa_map&num_car=1818&lang=en

4: http://d-maps.com/carte.php?lib=new_york_map&num_car=7478&lang=en

MAP 1
Northeast America



MAP 2
The approach to Quebec



MAP 3
Colonial area of operations
(See map 4 for inset detail)

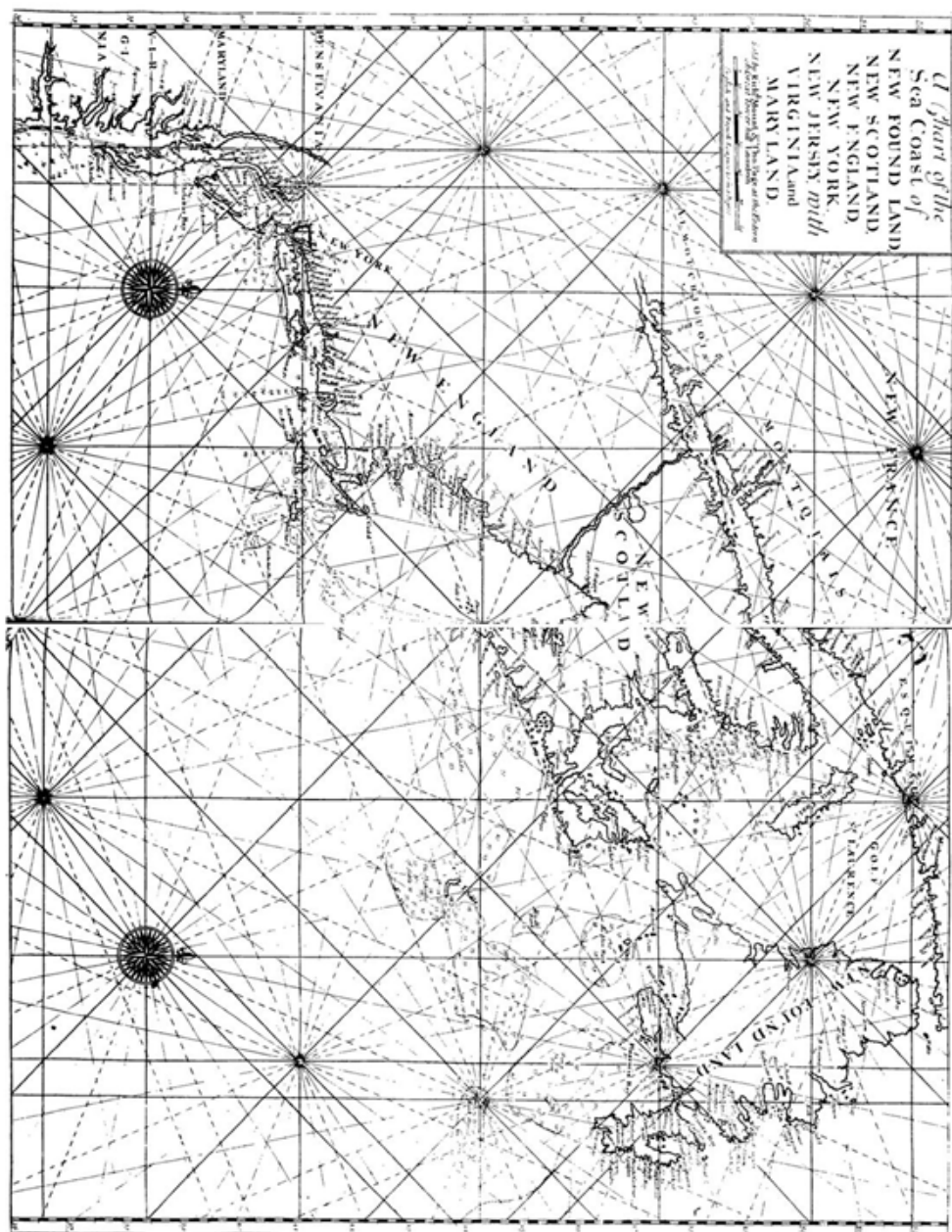


MAP 4
The route to Montreal



MAP 5

Chart from *The English Pilot*, (London, 1706)



Notes

All dates follow the ‘Old Style’ convention, which is prevalent in the source material, unless otherwise specified. The Julian calendar was ten days behind the ‘New Style’ Gregorian calendar in the seventeenth century and eleven days behind after 1700. For clarity, the year begins on 1 January and not 25 March.

This thesis covers the period surrounding 1707 when the Act of Union came into force, therefore ‘England’ and ‘Britain’ are both used where appropriate.

Spelling and punctuation in quotations have been modernised. Names of people and places have been standardised as there are numerous spellings in the manuscripts.

INTRODUCTION

The abortive expedition to capture Quebec, sent under the auspices of Secretary of State Henry St John towards the close of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), was the first large-scale British military endeavour to combat the French in Canada. Led by General John Hill, it comprised an impressive array of units needed to conduct military operations in Canada, and was then the largest military force ever assembled in that part of the world. The fleet which carried them, commanded by Rear-Admiral Sir Hovenden Walker, met with ruin on the approach to Quebec on the night of 23 August 1711. Several troop transports and hundreds of lives were lost off the rocky north shore of the notoriously dangerous St Lawrence River, which brought to an end this unprecedented combined operation. Upon receiving news of the disaster, the colonial force making its simultaneous landward thrust towards Montreal, under Lieutenant-General Francis Nicholson, also withdrew.¹

The expedition could easily have succeeded given better political leadership. As this was lacking, it was doomed to fail from its very conception. The ambitious St John had enforced a culture of secrecy surrounding the expedition's organisation because it was his personal project and so it needed to be hidden not only from the French, but also from the scrutiny of his political opponents. He did this by acquiring an insufficient quantity of provisions, which would imply that the fleet being assembled would be sent somewhere in Europe. This proved to be extremely detrimental to the expedition's chances of success as not only was it dispatched from England precariously late in the year for a Canadian campaign, but this plan also

¹ Hill and Nicholson temporarily held these ranks for the purpose of the expedition. At the time Hill was a brigadier-general, whilst Nicholson was a colonel, Dalton, Charles, (ed.), *English Army Lists and Commission Registers, 1661-1714*, VI, (London, 1904), p. 20.

required the fleet to rendezvous at Boston in order to acquire further supplies. Logistically, this was very problematical and served to expose differences between the British and the colonials which would become even more apparent several decades later. Another reason for failure was the St Lawrence itself. It had never before been sailed upon, or charted, by the Royal Navy. The river was a dangerous enigma to sailors unfamiliar with its navigation. Considering how events unfolded and escalated into catastrophe, Walker and Hill ultimately arrived at a sensible conclusion when they decided to return to Great Britain.

The expedition was a result of the turbulent political environment towards the end of Queen Anne's reign. Interminable military campaigning and high wartime taxes had served to quell public enthusiasm for the war.² However, it was the misguided impeachment of the High Tory Anglican clergyman, Dr Henry Sacheverell, which altered the British political landscape and brought down the Whig ministry in 1710. The duumvirate of the captain-general, the Duke of Marlborough, and the lord high treasurer, the Earl of Godolphin, had dictated policy for long enough. In an age that lacked freedom of speech, Sacheverell was brought to trial by Godolphin for attacking the 1688 revolution, and the rise of the Whigs and their Dissenting allies. Sacheverell consequently became a rallying-figure for the Tory cause, securing great public support, prompting the London mob into action.³ Godolphin's old colleague from the days of the triumvirate delivered the death blow to the Whig ministry. Robert Harley, who had become disenchanted and forced to resign from office in 1708 by the partnership of Marlborough and Godolphin, had

² Brewer, John, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688-1783*, (Cambridge (MA), 1990), pp. 199-202; Trevelyan, G. M., *England Under the Stuarts*, (London, 2002), pp. 484-485.

³ Biddle, Sheila, *Bolingbroke and Harley*, (London, 1975), pp. 162-166; Holmes, Geoffrey, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, (second edition, London, 1987), pp. 92-93.

returned to prominence. His steady efforts to gain royal influence had succeeded through his ties with the Queen's favourite, and Hill's sister, Abigail Masham, who had supplanted Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. Queen Anne began appointing Tories to ministerial positions and Harley eventually became head of the new ministry in August 1710, when he was awarded the position of chancellor of the exchequer. The new political configuration was confirmed in the following month by the electorate's overwhelming support.⁴

The Marlborough-Godolphin period had ended and in their place came two experienced politicians who were also great friends. Harley and St John dominated the final years of the Stuart era. Once they assumed office, their immediate agenda was to find a way to end the war.⁵ To do so, the Tories had to disentangle Britain from its commitments to Austria and the United Provinces. These allies had stood together with Britain on the battlefields of Europe, but Marlborough's victories fostered hugely inflated expectations of what could be achieved against France. It was thought that the Whig 'continental' approach to strategy was disastrous and unpatriotic, by contributing vastly expensive land forces to the cause of their Austrian and Dutch allies. Instead, the Tories believed that a 'blue-water' policy should have been implemented, the concept being that a cheaper war should have been fought in the maritime and colonial sphere, which would have reaped huge rewards in terms of trade and territory.⁶

⁴ Biddle, *Bolingbroke and Harley*, 173; Hill, Brian, W., *Robert Harley: Speaker, Secretary of State and Premier Minister*, (New Haven and London, 1988), pp. 125-128; Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, pp. 75-76; Trevelyan, G. M., *England Under Queen Anne*, (London, 1948), III, pp. 84-88.

⁵ Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, p. 77.

⁶ Simms, Brendan, *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire*, (London, 2008), pp. 59, 63.

War had been inevitable since the death in 1700 of the childless King Carlos II of Spain. Complex royal bloodlines resulted in there being two principal rival claimants to the Spanish throne, one each from the two most powerful royal houses in Europe – the Austrian Habsburgs and the French Bourbons. This would have serious implications for the European balance of power. King Louis XIV of France recognised the Will of Carlos II, and thus his grandson, Philippe, Duke of Anjou, became Felipe V, King of Spain, in direct contravention of the Second Partition Treaty, agreed in conjunction with King William III of England. To protect his grandson's position, Louis ordered French troops to occupy the barrier fortresses of the Spanish Netherlands, to prevent a Dutch challenge. This was unacceptable to William, as he was also stadtholder of the United Provinces. A French army also moved to occupy parts of the Spanish Italian territories, resulting in war with Austria in 1701. The French had also gained advantages in trade with the Spanish colonies and, upon the death of James II, the deposed king of England, Louis disregarded the Treaty of Ryswick he signed in 1697 and recognised James' son, the Old Pretender James 'III', as England's new monarch. For these reasons the maritime powers, the English and Dutch, joined Austria in a 'Grand Alliance' to preserve the balance of power against the threat of a Bourbon hegemony.⁷ England's growing influence had made it the central pillar of the alliance and English power would dominate both on land and at sea.

With William's death in 1702, Marlborough became captain-general of the allied armies in Flanders. An ambitious strategic vision was realised in that same year

⁷ Clark, G. N., 'War Trade and Trade War, 1701-1713', *The Economic History Review*, vol. I, no. 2, (January 1928), pp. 268-269; Lynn, John A., *The Wars of Louis XIV, 1667-1714*, (Harlow, 1999), pp. 266-268; Roosen, William, 'The Origins of the War of the Spanish Succession', in Black, Jeremy (ed.), *The Origins of War in Early Modern Europe*, (Edinburgh, 1987), pp. 151-175, Trevelyan, *England Under the Stuarts*, pp. 445-449.

when it was recognised that permanent naval superiority in the Mediterranean would provide great benefits for the alliance. This was an extension of the Williamite policy in the Nine Years War (1688-1697) that sought to establish naval superiority in the Mediterranean to support a large army deployed in Europe, after the French naval threat was largely extinguished at Barfleur and La Hogue in 1692.⁸ With the outbreak of war, Admiral of the Fleet Sir George Rooke was therefore dispatched to capture and secure the Spanish port of Cadiz as a naval base for further Mediterranean operations. Cadiz would also offer the added benefits of denying the Spanish a significant proportion of their trade, whilst offering the opportunity to open an Iberian front. However, Rooke did not meet with success. The troops employed lacked discipline and committed several atrocities against the local populace whilst drunk, outraging much of Europe.⁹ After re-embarking them, Rooke, who had been worried about French encirclement by both the Brest and Toulon fleets, recognised that he had to follow up failure with success to give the politicians in London faith in a maritime strategy (Marlborough had taken almost as many fortified cities in 1702 as had been taken by the Allies during the entire preceding Nine Years War). The navy had to prove its worth. Illustrating the new global vision that then gripped naval thinking, part of Rooke's force was detached from his fleet, led by Commodore Hovenden Walker, and sailed for the West Indies to attack French colonies there.

⁸ Gradish, Stephen F., 'The Establishment of British Seapower in the Mediterranean, 1689-1713', *Canadian Journal of History*, vol. X, no. 1, (April, 1975), pp. 4, 15; Harding, Richard, 'Sailors and Gentlemen of Parade: Some Professional and Technical Problems Concerning the Conduct of Combined Operations in the Eighteenth Century', *The Historical Journal*, vol. XXXII, no. 1. (March, 1989), p. 36; Kennedy, Paul, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, (London, 2001), pp. 80, 84-85; Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, pp. 40-41.

⁹ Owen, J. H., *War at sea under Queen Anne, 1702-1708*, (London, 1938), pp. 71-81; Rodger, N. A. M., *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815*, (London, 2004), pp. 165-166.

After news of Cadiz reached London, St John's uncle,¹⁰ the Tory secretary of state, the Earl of Nottingham, imparted his vision for naval strategy to Marlborough. Acknowledging that Cadiz had been an ignominious failure, Nottingham declared that England's honour must be restored, especially considering the outrage caused by the dishonourable actions of some of the troops. These incidents, which had included the desecration of churches and the torture of locals, had been a public relations disaster for the administration. Nottingham thought it was imperative to counter this with a naval victory as soon as one could be achieved. For this he suggested that Rooke intercept the French squadron at Vigo which had accompanied the Spanish treasure fleet from the Americas. Nottingham emphasised the value of Mediterranean operations when he noted that the French had thirty capital ships in that sea and therefore thought it necessary to counter them by sending a fleet of no less than forty ships-of-the-line there each campaigning season. He also recognised, despite Rooke's failure, that a Mediterranean base remained essential to maintain a fleet there, so that ships could repair and winter on station. A base would also deny the French the trade from the Levant and vital corn supplies from North Africa.

Nottingham also stressed the importance of the coastal waters around Britain, where he thought sixty-four frigates and men-of-war should be stationed to protect trade and the coastline from any French threat. To counter this, Dunkirk was specifically mentioned as a suitable candidate for blockade as it was a haven for French privateers. Nottingham also indicated that colonial operations could offer huge advantage to England. He thought that Cartagena and Havana presented opportunities to increase power and influence in the West Indies and thought that the

¹⁰ Horwitz, Henry, *Revolution Politicks: The Career of Daniel Finch Second Earl of Nottingham, 1647-1730*, (Cambridge, 1968), p. 198.

Dutch should assist in this wider strategy.¹¹ Nottingham attached great value to naval policy as he feared that a purely land-based conflict would result in a similar outcome to the Nine Years War, where little advantage was gained from a great effort.¹²

Much of Nottingham's foresight proved to be accurate. Although he was oblivious to the fact, Rooke, displaying initiative, had already either taken or destroyed the vessels of the Spanish treasure fleet and its accompanying French squadron at Vigo Bay.¹³ Although Walker's squadron had been dispatched to the West Indies, it had not followed its intended plan. The expedition focused on Guadeloupe and did not receive the planned support of a Dutch contingent, which Nottingham and the lord lieutenant of Ireland, the Earl of Rochester, had organised in a secret Cabinet committee – a body that was not again seen until St John began to plan for the Quebec expedition.¹⁴

Several ports were acquired over the course of the war to assist Mediterranean operations. Lisbon was utilised from 1703, when Portugal switched sides after months of negotiating the Methuen Treaties. Also, the presence of an Anglo-Dutch fleet off Lisbon demonstrated to King Pedro III that the maritime powers were best placed to defend (and attack) his South American empire. He thus agreed to join the war against France and Spain.¹⁵ However, this also altered the alliance's war aims to include the ridiculous ambition of placing the Archduke Charles upon the Spanish

¹¹ Hattendorf, John B.; Knight, R. J. B.; Rodger, N. A. M.; Till, G., 'British Naval Documents, 1204-1960', *Navy Records Society*, vol. CXXXI, (1993), pp. 208-211, Nottingham to Marlborough, 6 October 1702.

¹² Hattendorf, John, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession: A Study of the English View and Conduct of Grand Strategy, 1702-1712*, (New York; London, 1987), p. 70.

¹³ Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*, pp. 81-86; Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean*, p. 166.

¹⁴ Burton, Ivor F., 'The Secretary at War and the Administration of the Army during the War of the Spanish Succession' (University of London PhD thesis, 1960), p.160; Horwitz, *Revolution Politics*, p. 177.

¹⁵ Chandler, John, *Marlborough as Military Commander*, (London, 2000), p. 110; Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean*, pp. 166-167.

throne which prolonged the war.¹⁶ A permanent naval presence was established in the Mediterranean when Gibraltar was taken in 1704, after a council of war decided not to attack their original target of Cadiz, whilst Port Mahon on Minorca was captured in 1708.¹⁷

The only major fleet battle of the war took place off Malaga in 1704, where approximately fifty line-of-battle ships on each side pounded one other, inflicting thousands of casualties. Although not a single vessel was lost, Rooke's Mediterranean presence was preserved as the French fleet, under Louis' illegitimate son, the Comte de Toulouse, withdrew to its base at Toulon. Some Tories absurdly attempted to place Rooke's victory above that of Marlborough's at Blenheim, which had occurred almost two weeks earlier, as an example of the benefits of a maritime over a continental strategy. Nevertheless, Malaga secured Gibraltar and Rooke had unwittingly prevented the junction of the entire French Navy for the duration of the war, as the French later scuttled their Mediterranean fleet in 1707.¹⁸

Nottingham's vision of a primarily naval Mediterranean strategy had also been communicated to the Grand Pensionary of the United Provinces when he argued that naval superiority there would block French involvement with the Barbary States; help the Huguenots in the Cevennes; assist in Sicily; transport Austrian troops; and persuade Savoy to switch sides.¹⁹ All of this was achieved during the war primarily due to the efforts of the fleet. After 1707, the Royal Navy, accompanied by a small number of Dutch warships, dominated the Mediterranean. The fleet was able to

¹⁶ Trevelyan, *England Under the Stuarts*, p. 465. The original war aims were in fact achieved in 1706, with even Louis XIV willing to accept the peace terms, Chandler, *Marlborough as Military Commander*, p. 187.

¹⁷ Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, p. 45.

¹⁸ Black, *Warfare in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 147; Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean*, p. 170.

¹⁹ Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, pp. 69-70; Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*, p. 43.

prevent enemy naval activity and deny the French access to North African sources of grain, which had a devastating effect when the French harvest failed over the winter of 1708-1709. British ships were also able to freely transport Austrian troops between the Italian and Spanish theatres of war. This establishment of superiority in the Mediterranean was clearly a turning point in British fortunes. The French Navy no longer possessed control over their coastal areas or obvious spheres of influence. The danger posed by the possible link-up of the French Brest and Toulon squadrons had passed to be replaced by a new threat from state-sanctioned privateers. Consequently, the importance Nottingham subscribed to Dunkirk soon became evident.

After the Battle of Malaga, the French were unable to maintain an effective fleet to counter the Anglo-Dutch presence due to poor finances and the need to provide for their large armies, which faced strong opposition in the characters of Marlborough and Prince Eugene of Savoy. French naval policy was instead reduced to financing privateers to target allied trade.²⁰ Such activity was primarily centred on Dunkirk which protected over 100 privateering vessels, although St Malo also harboured forty. Allied convoys were not well protected and the privateers had a devastating impact on trade. With the concentration of the Royal Navy on maintaining a fleet in the Mediterranean, its other duties were neglected so much that, in 1707, London merchants created uproar, demanding an end to their constant losses at sea. An Act of Parliament was passed in 1708 for the 'better securing the trade of this kingdom by cruisers and convoys'. The first article of this Act was to secure forty-three vessels for the sole purpose of trade protection around Great Britain.²¹

²⁰ Clark, 'War Trade and Trade War', p. 263.

²¹ Black, Jeremy, *Warfare in the Eighteenth Century*, (London, 2002), pp. 147-148; Clark, 'War Trade and Trade War', p. 264; Herman, Arthur, *To Rule the Waves: How the British Navy Shaped the Modern World*, (London, 2005), p. 240; Merriman, R. D., (ed.), 'Queen Anne's Navy: Documents Concerning

This came six years after Nottingham first identified the need to station cruisers in such numbers to protect Britain's trade.

The strategy outlined by Nottingham in the early stages of the war, when the Tories still retained some influence, allowed England to become a member of the first rank of European powers. He resigned his office in 1704 in protest at the steadily increasing dominance of the Whigs in the ministry.²² Blue-water policy therefore took a blow as no major operation outside of Europe ensued and supporters of the Tory strategy fell silent with Marlborough's successful land campaigns. Nottingham did, however, understand the need for balance, unlike Rochester who advocated an exclusively naval war.²³ Marlborough also agreed that a Mediterranean presence was crucial as it would divert French attention.²⁴ However, Nottingham did not entirely agree with the Duke's policy and argued that the war should not be prosecuted in Flanders, but in Italy, Spain and the West Indies where colonies and trade could be seized without maintaining a large and expensive army.²⁵ The Mediterranean and the Americas were clearly central to his vision of a global maritime and amphibious strategy.²⁶

In sum, the Royal Navy performed a supporting role in the war, but nevertheless established superiority at sea. Its operations were primarily intended to support land forces in the Mediterranean and also had a role in protecting British

the Administration of the Navy of Queen Anne, 1702-1714', *Navy Records Society*, vol. CCIII, (1961), pp. 338-340; Owen, *War at Sea Under Queen Anne*, pp. 284-285.

²² Biddle, *Bolingbroke and Harley*, p. 119; Horwitz, *Revolution Politics*, pp. 194-199.

²³ Horwitz, *Revolution Politics*, p. 167. Rochester made similar arguments in the Nine Years War, Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, p. 41.

²⁴ Chandler, *Marlborough as Military Commander*, p. 167; Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, p. 85.

²⁵ Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, p. 74; Horwitz, *Revolution Politics*, pp. 168-169.

²⁶ Webb, Stephen Saunders, 'William Blathwayt, Imperial Fixer: Muddling Through to Empire, 1689-1717', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third series, vol. XXVI, no. 3 (July, 1969), p. 394.

trade.²⁷ Other theatres were clearly peripheral, as naval operations in the colonies generally occurred at the request of colonial governors intent on securing their interests.²⁸ There had not been a grand imperial strategy laid down in London. Successive ministries were often only concerned with trade protection and the Whigs only agreed on colonial operations as long as they did not interfere with their European strategy.²⁹ Had Tories such as Nottingham held power during the course of the war then British strategy would have been very different.

As Marlborough's campaigning had not yet won the war by 1710, the Tories highlighted the ineffectiveness of the continental strategy. Harley and St John recognised that political propaganda could further their goal of ending the war. In order to detract from the previous administration, Jonathan Swift was employed to comment on the failings of the Whigs and to sell the Tory point of view. In his famous pamphlet, *The Conduct of the Allies*, Swift stated that the war was fought by the Whigs as 'principals' when the Tories thought the British should have been mere 'auxiliaries'. Essentially, Swift mirrored the Tory argument that the war should have been prosecuted primarily in Spain, which was the focus of their war aims, and at sea and in the colonies, where wealth could be acquired, rather than in the costly and protracted land campaigns in Flanders that spanned a decade. These maritime versus continental debates would permeate a series of British administrations throughout the century.³⁰

Swift was also used to convince an already sceptical public of the benefits of ignoring their treaty obligations and negotiating a unilateral peace at the expense of

²⁷ Richmond, Herbert (Hughes, E. A. (ed.)), *The Navy as an Instrument of Policy, 1558-1727*, (Cambridge, 1953), p. 360.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

²⁹ Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, p. 191.

³⁰ Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, pp. 314-317; 366; 406-408.

their allies. Swift called for British disengagement from the ‘Dutch’ war, as he alleged Britain was fighting for foreign interests. Both Allies had duplicitously broken the articles of the Grand Alliance, for example, the Dutch contrived to trade with France and did not meet their naval quotas, while the Austrians had held secret negotiations with France in 1706.³¹ Swift also declared that, through the Whigs’ unquestioning support for the Allies, the cost of the war had ruined Britain. There was truth in these accusations, yet the Tories were themselves engaging in secret negotiations with the French. In essence then, the Whigs should have followed a blue-water strategy to achieve security and success, and left the Allies to perform a holding action against France on the continent. With the rise of the Tories and the instigation of the Quebec expedition, Britain saw the reversion to traditional English foreign policy, harking back to the privateers of Elizabeth I, and the official blue-water policies of the Commonwealth and Charles II.³² William’s Mediterranean naval policy had not invoked blue-water thinking as it was initiated to maintain the army in Europe, rather than focus on taking colonies or trade.³³ Ironically, Swift’s pamphlet was published in October 1711 when Walker had just returned from Canada after his unsuccessful attempt to demonstrate the advantages of blue-water warfare.³⁴

The politics of Anne’s reign is amply covered by the historiography. Harley and St John were two contrasting personalities, attracting much attention. By securing office, this great friendship soon turned sour. Harley was from a dissenting

³¹ Clark, ‘War Trade and Trade War, 1701-1713’, pp. 268, 276-277; Henderson, Nicholas, *Prince Eugen of Savoy*, (London, 2002), pp. 137-138; Lynn, *The Wars of Louis XIV*, p. 310; Owen, *War at Sea Under Queen Anne*, p. 37.

³² Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*, p. 168. The Tory blue-water arguments were simply ‘reverting to classic Stuart grand strategy’, Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, p. 59.

³³ Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*, p. 171; Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, pp. 80, 84-85; Lambert, Andrew, *War at Sea in the Age of Sail*, (London, 2002) p. 89; Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, pp. 40-41.

³⁴ Swift, Jonathan, *The Conduct of the Allies...*, (second edition, London, 1711); Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, pp. 58-61.

background and had changed his political colours, but was never a High Tory. He believed in moderation and disliked the rise of party within Parliament, and thought the interests of the Court and Crown were best served if they were not hampered by factional fighting between the growing forces of Whig and Tory. As *de facto* head of the new ministry, Harley was able to put his thoughts into effect by offering positions to both moderate Whigs and Tories, and he secured an ally in the form of Queen Anne. Yet he found difficulties in implementing his scheme for moderation. As the election of 1710 had returned a huge majority for the Tories in the House of Commons, many Tory politicians expected the High Tories to gain positions of power. By creating a moderate government, Harley had made himself vulnerable and his position ensured that the majority of High Tories would serve to hamper his ministry, rather than support it.³⁵ Thus he would have to rely on the support of a handful of moderate Whigs to remain in power. His philosophy was a creditable one yet the strength of the Tories, which ironically allowed him to form a ministry in the first place, would eventually bring about his demise.

The High Tories looked elsewhere for leadership and found the young secretary of state for the northern department, Henry St John.³⁶ This office was held by Harley when he was part of the triumvirate, when St John served under him as secretary at war. Despite returning to office, St John was disappointed with his new appointment, desiring the more prestigious southern department instead. His personal qualities were the opposite to those of the ‘incorruptible’ Harley.³⁷ He was young,

³⁵ Although the Cabinet was overwhelmingly Tory, Plumb, J. H., ‘The Organization of the Cabinet in the Reign of Queen Anne’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth series, vol. VII, (1957), p. 145.

³⁶ Biddle, *Bolingbroke and Harley*, p. 196; Dickinson, H. T., *Bolingbroke*, (London, 1970), p. 81.

³⁷ Holmes, Geoffrey, ‘Harley, St John and the Death of the Tory Party’, in Holmes, Geoffrey (ed.), *Britain After the Glorious Revolution, 1689-1714*, (London, 1969), p. 218.

atheistic, ambitious, adulterous, astute, and he picked up the baton for the High Tory cause when he sensed opportunity. His ambition was plain for the world to see and he was convinced by traditional Tory blue-water strategy.³⁸ To feed his ambition for advancement he concocted the idea for the expedition to capture Quebec which had originally been considered, but not executed, by the previous Whig ministry. The fall of Quebec would help to end the war quickly and serve as a bargaining chip at the peace negotiations. It would also divert attention from Marlborough in Flanders at a time when the ministry still relied upon him, especially as several of his regiments were withdrawn from Flanders for the expedition. Whereas Europe was deemed a priority by the Whigs, North America had been considered to be of little importance to overall grand strategy.³⁹ Indeed, for politicians in Europe, the area of North America and the West Indies was seen as a geographical whole.⁴⁰ Even St John himself had once referred to his Quebec project as the 'West India Expedition'.⁴¹ Such a vast area was inconceivable to the imagination of most Europeans, perhaps resulting in a misunderstanding of its strategic value which did not mature until the Seven Years War (1756-1763). St John attempted to change this lack of interest in blue-water and colonial policy. The expedition's failure and the later collapse of the Tory ministry would, however, consign a negative view on his scheme in the historiography.

³⁸ Biddle, *Bolingbroke and Harley*, p. 114; Holmes, 'Harley, St John and the Death of the Tory Party', p. 221; Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*, III, p. 118; Waller, G. M., *Samuel Vetch, Colonial Enterpriser*, (Chapel Hill (North Carolina), 1960), p. 208, The National Archives, SP 44/213, St John to Hunter, 6 February 1711.

³⁹ Leach, Douglas Edward, *Roots of Conflict: British Armed Forces and Colonial Americans, 1677-1763*, (Chapel Hill (NC), 1986), p. 27.

⁴⁰ Morgan, William Thomas, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711', *Bulletin of the Departments of History and Political and Economic Science in Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario, Canada*, no. 56, (May 1928), p. 3; Waller, *Samuel Vetch*, p. 208.

⁴¹ Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Manuscripts of His Grace the Duke of Portland*, IV, p. 652, St John to Harley, 8 January 1711.

In the manner of St John, this thesis shall turn away from Marlborough's land-based European campaigns. A Whiggish perspective of the War of the Spanish Succession has continued to influence historians, resulting in three primary characteristics concerning the British historiography. Firstly, and perhaps unsurprisingly, it is overwhelmingly Anglocentric. Secondly, its naval dimensions have been severely neglected. Thirdly, most works have concentrated on the career of Marlborough. Even here, his campaigns in Flanders and the 1704 march on the Danube have received the greatest interest to the detriment of the other aspects of the war. As a result, the actions of the other participating nations are largely ignored unless Marlborough was personally involved and the war seemingly ended after his last campaign in 1711. Little attention is given to the conduct of the war in Germany (excluding the 1704 campaign), Iberia, Italy or the Americas. The campaigns in which the British were not engaged (those of 1701, 1712 and 1713) are only rarely and fleetingly examined. Furthermore, although British naval ascendancy was confirmed during this period, the maritime sphere has received scant attention in comparison to other periods in the Royal Navy's history, with only Ruth Bourne and J. H. Owen covering limited aspects of the British naval war in any great detail.⁴² It is my intention that this thesis will contribute towards correcting this imbalance by studying a little known combined operation of an unprecedented scale, which was sent to the colonies in the latter stages of the war.

That is not to say Marlborough was unimportant, nor his biographies worthless.⁴³ Clearly his dominant role in both military and political affairs

⁴² Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne* and Bourne, Ruth, *Queen Anne's Navy in the West Indies*, (New Haven, 1939).

⁴³ Barnett, Corelli, *The First Churchill: Marlborough, Soldier and Statesman*, (London, 1974); Chandler, *Marlborough as Military Commander*; Churchill, Winston S., *Marlborough: His Life and*

necessitates much discussion, but this has come at a cost. For instance, English biographies of Prince Eugene of Savoy are a rarity despite his influential presence at all but one of Marlborough's famous victories and the fact that he went on to command the allied army in Flanders, in 1712, after the Duke's dismissal.⁴⁴ The war was fought over the Spanish inheritance, but very few works have covered that theatre of war and the Whig mantra of 'no peace without Spain'⁴⁵ has not been adequately reflected in the historiography. Only the works of David Francis, J. A. C. Hugill and Henry Kamen have provided a detailed analysis of that theatre. The French are equally neglected, but slightly better served thanks to studies of the French army during the reign of Louis XIV.⁴⁶ Marlborough's most able opponent, the Duc de Villars, has just a single biography written in English to his name.⁴⁷ The French victory in 1712 at Denain – the last battle in the Flanders theatre which reversed much of Marlborough's gains – is largely absent from the British record because the Duke did not command the allies there. Likewise, the Quebec expedition has been largely ignored because of its failure at a time when Marlborough took the fortress at Bouchain.

Although Marlborough is unavoidably featured in these pages, they shall mostly be punctuated by the lesser names of Hill, Nicholson, St John and Walker. It is the latter to whom most attention shall be focused. Walker, when not omitted from the annals of history, has received most of the blame for the disaster on the St

Times, (London, 1933-1938), 4 vols; Hibbert, Christopher, *The Marlboroughs: John and Sarah Churchill, 1650-1714*, (London, 2002); Holmes, Richard, *Marlborough: England's Fragile Genius*, (London, 2008); Jones, J. R., *Marlborough*, (Cambridge, 1993) are amongst them.

⁴⁴ Henderson, Nicholas, *Prince Eugen of Savoy*, (London, 1964) and McKay, Derek, *Prince Eugene of Savoy*, (London, 1977).

⁴⁵ Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, pp. 77-78; Trevelyan, *England Under the Stuarts*, p. 465.

⁴⁶ Notably Lynn, *The Wars of Louis XIV*.

⁴⁷ Sturgill, Claude, C., *Marshal Villars and the War of the Spanish Succession*, (Kentucky, 1965).

Lawrence.⁴⁸ C. T. Atkinson has even absurdly claimed that the Quebec expedition denied Marlborough ultimate victory at Paris because of the reallocation of several battalions from his army.⁴⁹ Walker does not deserve such derision. As the naval commander, Walker undoubtedly held responsibility for the tragedy on the St Lawrence; however, he was operating under very difficult circumstances, much of which were outside of his control. His considerable naval experience indicates that he was a competent mariner, especially as he had convoyed ships on numerous transoceanic voyages. Still, a modern view of naval operations should not be allowed to distort the huge challenge of safely conveying a fleet to Quebec. Walker took command in an age when maritime journeys were extremely perilous. Crossing the Atlantic in the early eighteenth century was a difficult and dangerous task in itself, yet he then had to continue into the confines of a dangerous river without adequate charts or pilots. Indeed, the majority of combined army-navy operations of the period resulted in failure and Walker's mission of sailing to Quebec was a much harder prospect than might be imagined today.⁵⁰ He later suffered, like many suspected Tory sympathisers, from the political turmoil resulting from the accession of the Hanoverians in 1714 and the long ascendancy of the Whigs. Consequently, Walker

⁴⁸ Including Morgan, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711'; Owen, *War at Sea Under Queen Anne*; Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*; and Waller, *Samuel Vetch*.

⁴⁹ Atkinson, C. T., 'The Peninsular "Second Front" in the Spanish Succession War', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, vol. XXII, (1943/1944), p. 223 and 'Queen Anne's War in the West Indies Part II: The Windward Sphere', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, vol. XXIV, (1946), p. 197.

⁵⁰ Barnett, Corelli, *Marlborough*, (Ware, 1999), p. 48, noted the general failure of joint operations of the period. Willis, S. B. A., 'Fleet Performance and Capability in the Eighteenth-Century Royal Navy', *War in History*, vol. XI, no. 4, (2004), discussed the difficulties of fleet command. Issues of joint-command at sea and land in contemporary amphibious operations, also caused confusion. Harding, 'Sailors and Gentlemen of Parade', pp. 37, 40-43; McLay, K. A. J., 'Sir Francis Wheler's Caribbean and North American Expedition, 1693: A Case Study in Combined Operational Command during the Reign of William III', *War in History*, vol. XIV, no. 4, (2007), p. 384.

later felt the need to defend his record and published his journal from the expedition in 1720.

Little secondary material has been published about the expedition in modern times. Gerald S. Graham's indispensable republication of Walker's 'Journal', which also includes relevant correspondence, provides a great source of information.⁵¹

William Thomas Morgan and, more recently, Richard Harding have contributed articles concerning the expedition, but it is surprising that there is little more than this.⁵² Unfortunately, most other secondary works which have referred to it have often relegated the expedition to a single paragraph, usually to merely note its failure. This is because it is often included to illustrate the political fluctuations of the time, rather than as an example of a new strategic element in the war against the French, especially as it serves as an example of the decline in Marlborough's power. With such little published, this thesis, therefore, overwhelmingly relies on archival material, sometimes published in journals and calendars, but mostly in their original form. Luckily, there is a wealth of letters and documents preserved amongst the State Papers and Admiralty, Colonial and War Office records, most of which have received little attention. These are primarily located at the National Archives, the British Library and the National Maritime Museum's Caird Library. Additionally, Cabinet papers located at the Staffordshire Record Office have proved invaluable. Unfortunately, the *Edgar*, Walker's flagship, exploded at Portsmouth on his return from Canada,

⁵¹ Graham, Gerald S. (ed.), 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec, 1711', *Navy Records Society*, vol. XCIV, (1953); *Champlain Society*, vol. XXXII, (1953 (and 1969 for the *Champlain Society* facsimile reprint)) (All editions are virtually identical).

⁵² Morgan, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711' and 'The South Sea Company and the Canadian Expedition in the Reign of Queen Anne', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. VIII, no. 2, (May 1928); and Harding, Richard, 'The Expeditions to Quebec, 1690 and 1711: The Evolution of British Trans-Atlantic Amphibious Power', in *Guerres Maritimes, 1688-1713*, (1996).

destroying the majority of his personal papers and documents, which ensured that some details will forever remain hidden.

The historiography of British eighteenth-century joint operations has generally been devoted to the naval share of operations at the cost to the study of the army.⁵³ This is not the case here. Colonial, political, military and naval aspects of the expedition are all covered. Inevitably, some aspects will be favoured above others at times, yet a wide-ranging picture of the expedition will emerge. The colonial history of North America shall be discussed, as the American colonists had been clamouring for the mother country to assist in conquering the French North American empire for decades. Therefore, the political background is of immense importance. As already mentioned, the expedition was born out of this period of political turbulence. St John, in forming the project, usurped the Earl of Dartmouth's authority as the southern secretary, in whose jurisdiction colonial affairs lay, so that he could ideologically end the war using blue-water strategy and garner further power and promotion. Also, Harley did not favour launching the expedition and the reasons why St John was able to press ahead with it must be analysed.

Central to the argument is Walker's defence and Hill is held more accountable for much of the operational detail. Although he cannot take responsibility for the navigation of the St Lawrence, Hill was instrumental in the decision to return to England without attempting to attack the French in Newfoundland, which was the expedition's secondary target. As brother to the Queen's favourite, Hill obviously received his position through patronage, whereas Walker achieved his command through merit. Many historians have thought it absurd that these commanders were

⁵³ Harding, 'Sailors and Gentlemen of Parade', p. 55.

picked to command in the first place.⁵⁴ Therefore the biographies of Walker and Hill have been compiled to challenge their perceived shortcomings and to illustrate that they were capable and competent commanders.

Real blame for the failure of this expedition lies with St John's covert organisation of the expedition. Owing to the expedition's neglected place in the historiography of the War of the Spanish Succession, this thesis will mainly draw upon primary sources in order to closely reconstruct a narrative of its organisation and execution. The accompanying analysis will also allow a measured judgement of the expedition. The advantage of reconstructing this episode is that it allows for a detailed examination of how an early eighteenth-century expeditionary force was organised and assembled, albeit in unusual circumstances which revealed the imperfections of the process.

Along with the course of the Quebec expedition, the French ability to defend its colony shall also be considered, as well as the colonial effort against Montreal which was intended to divide the attention of the defenders of New France. The latter operation has received little coverage in the literature owing to the lack of material related to it. Here, this neglect is rectified somewhat as the diary of a Connecticut chaplain offers a detailed insight into the martial abilities of the colonies during, what the colonists referred to as, Queen Anne's War.⁵⁵

Despite being an abject failure, the expedition had little impact on events in the closing stages of the war. Fortunately for the British, its consequences were not overwhelmingly negative; unfortunately for Walker, his reputation suffered and he

⁵⁴ Including Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*; Parkman, Francis, *A Half-Century of Conflict*, (Boston, 1896); and Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*.

⁵⁵ The diary of Reverend Buckingham in *Roll and Journal of Connecticut Service in Queen Anne's War, 1710-1711*, The Acorn Club, Thirteenth publication, (New Haven (CT), 1916).

deserves to be exonerated. As Hill did not have the opportunity to prove himself at Quebec, this thesis naturally skews its focus towards the Admiral. It is understandable that, upon first glance, historians have relegated the expedition as being just one of many ambitious military operations which failed as the result of incompetence. However, this expedition should not be dismissed as an inglorious folly, but counted as something quite different, even unique. It represented an alteration in strategy which attempted to divert attention away from the costly land campaigning of continental Europe. This was a new commitment to the American theatre never seen before, where for at least twenty years the colonials had sought to neutralise the threat posed by their northern French neighbours. It was the first time Britain had acted on the colonial desire for large-scale imperial expansion on the North American continent. Such was this commitment that the force led by Walker and Hill was the largest ever seen in that part of the Americas up to that point.⁵⁶ In short, the expedition opened up North America to the potential of European campaigning. The 1711 expedition is naturally overshadowed by Wolfe's successful victory at Quebec, which dominates the military historiography of North America during the pre-American Revolution era. It is therefore necessary to compare the 1711 expedition with the operations in Canada during the Seven Years War and also other attempts which show that St John's objective was a difficult task for Walker and Hill to achieve. Whilst not a success, the 1711 expedition set a precedent for British administrations later in the century when the great project finally succeeded in 1759 on the Plains of Abraham.

⁵⁶ Churchill, *Marlborough*, IV, p. 391; Harding, 'The Expeditions to Quebec, 1690 and 1711', p. 205

CHAPTER 1

COLONIES AND POLITICS

The 1711 Quebec expedition was not the first time a strategy for the conquest of North America had been proposed, nor executed. It was, however, the first to have the full backing of the British state. Previously, after an easy victory at Port Royal in 1690, Massachusetts hubristically attempted to eliminate its French colonial rivals by conquering Quebec. English forces then adopted similar plans to take New France in each successive war fought with the French. These plans were not initiated by an imperialistic design originating in London, but by the repeated requests of the colonists to the mother country to aid them in their desire for security.

I: The North American Colonies

North America had witnessed rapid change because of large-scale colonisation during the seventeenth century. Spain had begun its colonisation drive, primarily in the south, during the sixteenth century. However, by the eighteenth century, as a power in irreversible decline, the Spanish proved to be of little trouble to the British colonies in the north, other than their occasional scrappy incursions around Florida.¹ The northern part of the continent would set the scene for most of the friction between the British and French colonial empires. By the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession, America was inhabited by hundreds of thousands of European-descended

¹ Black, Jeremy, *Britain as a Military Power, 1688-1815*, (London, 1999), p. 120, Black, Jeremy, *Crisis of Empire: Britain and America in the Eighteenth Century*, (London, 2008), p. 33; Hattendorf, John, B., 'Alliance, encirclement and attrition: British Grand Strategy in the War of the Spanish Succession, 1702-1713', in Kennedy, Paul, M., (ed.), *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, (London, 1991), p. 23.

settlers. There could not have been a greater contrast between the English and French colonies, as each imitated the distinct characteristics of their mother nations.

New France consisted of vast wilderness, punctuated by its riverine lifeline – the St Lawrence. This river provided New France's capital of Quebec with a communications route to the Atlantic and onwards to Europe. Quebec was ruled as if it were an extension of France. The personal rule of Louis XIV had stretched over the Atlantic to the forested swathes and snowy peaks of Canada, when royal control was established in 1663.² The colonists there were French, Catholic and held close alliances with the indigenous peoples, a minority of whom angered their tribal communities by converting to Catholicism. Usually their reasons were selfish rather than because of any particular religious motivation – to be saved from diseases that could not be cured by traditional shamans or to allow a trade in muskets. The Jesuits and Sulpicians were particularly active in New France, whilst the nuns at the Ursuline convent in Quebec schooled native girls.³ The colony did not attract large numbers of settlers from France, with perhaps only 15,000-19,000 inhabitants in an area of many thousands of square miles.⁴ The population of the city of Quebec numbered less than 3,000.⁵ Nevertheless, these hardy settlers and their Indian allies developed a bellicosity that posed a great threat to the neighbouring colonies of New England.

² Dickman, John A., and Young, Brian, *A Short History of Quebec*, (second edition, Montreal, 2000), p. 35.

³ Leach, Douglas Edward, *Roots of Conflict: British Armed Forces and Colonial Americans, 1677-1763*, (Chapel Hill (NC), 1986), p. 27; Dickman and Young, *A Short History of Quebec*, pp. 22, 44.

⁴ 15,000 is given in Trevelyan, G. M., *England Under Queen Anne*, (London, 1948), III, p. 139; 16,000 is stated in both Daigle, Jean, 'Acadia, 1604-1763: An Historical Synthesis', in Daigle, Jean, (ed.), *Acadia of the Maritimes: Thematic Studies from the Beginning to the Present*, (Moncton, 1995), p. 22; and Morgan, William Thomas, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711', *Bulletin of the Departments of History and Political and Economic Science in Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario, Canada*, no. 56, (May 1928), p. 27; and 19,000 is stated in Haffenden, Philip, S., 'France and England in North America, 1689-1713', Bromley, J. S. (ed.), *The New Cambridge Modern History, VI, The Rise of Great Britain and Russia, 1688-1715*, (Cambridge, 1970), p. 508.

⁵ Cartier, Gwenaël, 'City of Québec 1608-2008: 400 years of censuses', *Canadian Social Trends*, no. 85, (Summer 2008), p. 64, charts 2-3.

The history of Anglo-French competition in the region was a long one, stemming from the first established permanent settlements. When Quebec was still a small trading post it was briefly occupied by the English Kirke brothers, from 1629 to 1633.⁶ When it reverted to French control, a small fortified château was built, which served as the city's citadel. Similarly, Port Royal in Acadia (what is now Nova Scotia) had been taken on two occasions before the War of the Spanish Succession, in 1654 and 1690.⁷ The New Englanders actively sought to conquer their colonial neighbours during wartime, not only to heighten the economic benefits of the fur and skins trade, but to provide security from the proliferation of French and native border attacks.

New France was, in a sense, divided into three separate colonies, those of Canada, Acadia and Louisiana, and was modelled on the French provincial system. Each of these were further divided into districts, though Quebec would emerge as the most significant settlement and would serve equally as the capital of New France, Canada, and the Quebec district. In New France power was centralised, manifested ultimately in the person of the King and represented by a governor-general residing in Quebec.⁸ Although he took responsibility in military and diplomatic affairs, the governor-generals took instructions directly from Paris, like any other French province. Given the distance, this resulted in very slow and inefficient government. The other Canadian towns of Montreal and Trois-Rivieres were also fortified and were capitals, under lieutenant-governors, of their own districts within the colony of

⁶ Chartrand, René, *French Fortresses in North America 1535-1763: Québec, Montréal, Louisbourg and New Orleans*, (Oxford; New York, 2005), p. 12.

⁷ Graham, Gerald S., *Empire of the North Atlantic: The Maritime Struggle for North America*, (second edition, Toronto and London, 1958), p. 91.

⁸ The governor-generalship was always a military appointment, Stanley, George F. G., 'The Canadian Militia During the Ancien Régime', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, vol. XXII, (1943/1944), p. 161.

Canada.⁹ Only Roman Catholics were allowed to settle and all religious issues were handled by a bishop in Quebec.¹⁰ France clearly wanted to retain its huge territorial claims and maintain the power of absolute monarchy, and the Catholic Church, in the New World.

The rigid, absolutist structure of New France did not face any internal threat to its system of government, even though its people lived in a completely alien environment compared to the population of an average French province. This was despite its proximity to the British colonies which were developing individual systems of government. The British colonies were given a great deal of autonomy from the mother country and Protestant non-conformists were allowed to settle and rule according to their own particular beliefs.¹¹ With a rich mix of Christian traditions and immigrants from all over Europe, this cosmopolitanism provided for a diverse and expanding population, yet united under the British sovereign. The roots of the ideals of federalism and democracy in the North American continent were, however, evident even at this early stage.¹²

Both the French and British colonists were very much aware of their respective strategic positions. The population of the British colonies hugely outnumbered that of New France, but they were usually the victims of border raids by the French and their Indian allies. This occurred despite British America dwarfing New France in terms of population, boasting 350,000-400,000 colonists, though

⁹ Dickman and Young, *A Short History of Quebec*, pp. 35-36.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41, 44-45.

¹¹ Although, Catholics were generally restricted to Maryland, Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*, III, p. 137.

¹² Graham, Gerald S. (ed.), 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec, 1711', *Navy Records Society*, vol. XCIV, (1953), p. 27; Leach, D. E., *Arms for Empire: A Military History of the British Colonies in North America, 1607-1763*, (New York, 1973), pp. 147-148; Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*, III, p. 137.

spread thinly across the eastern seaboard of the continent.¹³ The centralisation that the government of New France offered allowed its people to fortify their towns and build outlying forts to act as a buffer to any potential attack. France also built a series of forts across North America to protect its territorial claims in an area which comprised huge swathes of sparsely populated territory. The capitals of each district were also fortified. This was quite a contrast to the English colonies where, although fearful of French and native attack, settlements were left unfortified.¹⁴ The French forts were primitive compared with the Vauban fortresses in Europe, naturally being smaller in scale and required to defend against raiding parties rather than large armies. However, the larger French settlements gradually built up their defences to provide formidable protection, not only against raiders, but European forces.

Skilled French engineers were responsible for fortifying much of New France. These 'King's Engineers' were experts in fortification and were picked according to their abilities. Indeed the profession was held in such high esteem that the King's Engineers were not part of the army's structure but were a separate entity.¹⁵ Vauban's most famous forts were located in Flanders, the perfect area for siege warfare, with large expanses of flat land, and numerous rivers and water obstacles that could be diverted to suit the requirements of a particular fortification. Yet Flanders could not be more dissimilar to French North America. With rocky mountains, river rapids, huge expanses of forest and swamp, geographical factors would determine a completely new attitude to the conduct of warfare. True geometrical Vauban-style

¹³ 350,000 is quoted in Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*, III, p. 139; 360,000 in 1713 by Simms, Brendan, *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire*, (London, 2008), p. 93; and Haffenden gives 400,000 as the figure, 'France and England in North America', p. 508.

¹⁴ Settlements had 'garrison houses' to offer protection for the local population in the event of an attack, Leach, *Arms for Empire*, p. 132.

¹⁵ Chartrand, *French Fortresses in North America*, pp. 8-10; Stanley, 'The Canadian Militia During the Ancien Régime', p. 161.

fortresses could not be built in such a challenging domain, especially due to the lack of suitable labour. A compromise in fortress design had to be made. For North American warfare the rules would have to be rewritten, as would the great French tradition of fortress design. Many small fortress outposts were almost medieval in character, which suited the wilderness far better than contemporary European designs, and were more suited to repelling raids than huge armies.¹⁶ Even stone windmills were used as strong-points and one served as a defensive point in Quebec during the siege of 1690.¹⁷ Also, Canada lacked a road-based infrastructure, forcing armies to travel along rivers, even more so than in Europe, due to the impassable terrain and vast distances involved. Experience in the vast, but sparsely populated, New World would dictate new challenges to the Europeans in terms of warfare. The blurred, indistinct and ever-changing borders of colonial territories would only add to the confusion. The old rules of battle were of no use in this harsh and unforgiving environment, whilst the familiarity of formal engagement in open warfare was reshaped with the involvement of native tribes.

The English colonies engaged in warfare with their French counterparts not just to gain territory, trade or advantage for the mother country, but primarily for security. French and Indian border incursions, which destroyed farms and villages, and kidnapped local inhabitants, were relatively commonplace. The raid on Deerfield, Massachusetts, in 1704, is a particularly notorious example of the French threat to their neighbours in time of war, when an entire community was decimated with over 150 residents kidnapped or killed.¹⁸ New Englanders were also unsafe at

¹⁶ Chartrand, René, *The Forts of New France in Northeast America, 1600-1763*, (Oxford; New York, 2008), p. 5.

¹⁷ Chartrand, *French Fortresses in North America*, p. 15.

¹⁸ Black, *Crisis of Empire*, p. 34; Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*, III, p. 141.

sea. Port Royal in Acadia provided a haven for French privateers that would harass the merchant shipping of the British colonials.¹⁹ The colonies of New England were not the only areas prone to attack. New York suffered from its large border areas and relied on maintaining good relations with the tribes of the Five Nations to remain intact.²⁰ The individual colonies were not centralised like those of New France, nor were they martial in character. The colonists' individualistic temperament was exacerbated when the Tories assumed office in 1710, as they had consistently tried to force the Occasional Conformity Bill through Parliament. The colonial Dissenters were suspicious of Tory plans for the colonies although, ironically, it was the Tories who actually responded to their demands for an expedition against Canada.²¹ Such differences were illustrated in 1702, when Bostonian guns fired upon the Royal Navy sloop *Swift* when it attempted to leave with impressed seamen aboard.²²

Unlike in New France, the natives were generally badly treated in the British colonies.²³ For the British this represented a lost chance at rapprochement with a potential ally knowledgeable of the local geography, which could prove critical when engaged in conflict with the French. The British colonials, therefore, had not exploited this resource, allowing the French a virtual monopoly over Indian support, which more than made up for a lack of French numbers.²⁴ Later in the century, the

¹⁹ Leach, *Roots of Conflict*, p. 27.

²⁰ Morgan, William Thomas, 'The Five Nations and Queen Anne', *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. XIII, no.2. (September, 1926), p. 169.

²¹ Parkman, Francis, *A Half-Century of Conflict*, (Boston, 1896), I, p. 158; Morgan, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711', p. 6; Trevelyan, G. M., *England Under the Stuarts*, (London, 2002), pp. 456-457.

²² Leach, *Roots of Conflict*, p. 34.

²³ Excepting the Quakers of Pennsylvania and the traders of the Hudson's Bay Company, Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*, III, p. 140.

²⁴ Although the tribes of the Five Nations, usually allied with the English, were more powerful than the Algonquian tribes that fought with the French, Leach, Douglas Edward, *The Northern Colonial Frontier, 1607-1763*, (New York, 1966), p. 11.

colonials would, however, diverge from the European style of warfare and adopt some Indian practices which would become peculiar to that theatre.²⁵

Whereas differences between Briton and colonial were already apparent, another group was present, other than the natives, which would contribute to further campaigns. As many as 2,500 Palatines, German refugees escaping their war-ravaged homeland, had made their way to New York in 1710. Many would volunteer for service in 1711. It was initially hoped that these new settlers would serve as a bulwark against the French and Indians, as well as providing a trade in naval stores.²⁶ North America was valued for its pines for use as masts and expansion into Canada would have increased this important resource for the navy, which relied heavily on Baltic suppliers.²⁷ Even if it were not for the naval stores and the fur trade, Quebec remained a vital military target given its strategic location.

The capture of Quebec would certainly be problematical, but strategically it was one of the most important cities in North America and not only because of its political importance. 'Quebec', in the local Algonquin tongue, translates as 'where the river narrows', that river being the St Lawrence.²⁸ About seventy miles wide at its mouth, it narrows at Quebec to less than a mile. The capital of the French empire in North America guarded the Canadian interior. Its strategic value was amplified by the fact that the St Lawrence flows from the Great Lakes. From there, access to the Mississippi allowed the masters of Quebec to venture throughout the continent, right

²⁵ Ferling, John, 'The New England Soldier: A Study in Changing Perceptions', *American Quarterly*, vol. XXXIII, no. 1 (Spring, 1981), p. 37.

²⁶ Historical Manuscripts Commission, *The Manuscripts of the House of Lords*, vol. IX, 1710-1712 (London, 1948), p. 115, no. 2776, 22 March 1711; Black, *Crisis of Empire*, p. 36; Dickinson, H. T., 'The Poor Palatines and the Parties', *The English Historical Review*, vol. LXXXII, no. 324 (July, 1967), p. 481.

²⁷ *The Journals of the House of Commons*, (London, 1803), XVI, 1708-1711, 10 May 1711, pp. 656-657.

²⁸ Manning, Stephen, *Quebec: The Story of Three Sieges*, (London; New York, 2009), p. xiv.

down to the shores of the Gulf of Mexico where the French later established the city of New Orleans.

Along this route the French were able to establish forts to prevent the British colonies from expanding and to foster friendly relations with local Indian tribes.²⁹ Indeed, this strategy was identified by English contemporaries. Robert Quarry, surveyor-general of customs in America, asserted that the French colonial presence ‘enclosed all [of] the Queen’s empire in North America’.³⁰ Quebec was vital in maintaining communications between France and its North American possessions. As it was the furthest point inland that oceangoing ships could reach, it was an economic centre where goods could be loaded and unloaded for further distribution around New France. It was also where French troops disembarked.³¹

This strategic importance was not always realised three thousand miles away in London, where North America did not feature in Britain’s immediate priorities. The New Englanders constantly pressed the ministry to take the war to New France. The British colonists desired security and they realised that if Quebec was taken, then New France would follow in its entirety.³² Port Royal was an irritating nest of French privateers. It had been a serious problem to the British colonies, all of which relied on the sea. Vessels from Port Royal had captured thirty-five ships, mostly Bostonian,

²⁹ Charbonneau, André; Desloges, Yvon; and Lafrance, Marc, *Québec the Fortified City: From the 17th to the 19th Century*, (Ottawa, 1982), p. 39.

³⁰ The Bodleian Library, Oxford, (hereafter cited as BLO), Clarendon MSS, vol. 102/157-159, Quarry to Godolphin, 1705; the New Englanders were worried that the colonies could be surrounded, their trade suffering as a result, Hattendorf, John B., *England in the War of the Spanish Succession: A Study of the English View and Conduct of Grand Strategy, 1702-1712*, (New York; London, 1987), p. 234.

³¹ Charbonneau; Desloges; and Lafrance, *Québec the Fortified City*, p. 37. The regulars were funded by the Minister of Marine and Colonies. The Troupes de la Marine were professional soldiers and a Canadian force, issued with white uniforms with black facings. There were probably fewer than 1,000 regulars stationed in Canada, Stanley, George F. G., ‘The Canadian Militia During the Ancien Régime’, pp. 158, 160-161, 164.

³² The colonies were unable to defend themselves by land and regarded ‘offence as the best defence’, Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, p. 191.

and 500 prisoners in 1708 alone.³³ The port was a logical target for the British as a precursor to attacking Quebec.

A Quebec expedition had been mooted several times during the War of the Spanish Succession after it had been raised by its staunchest advocate, Colonel Samuel Vetch. He had managed to convince the Whig ministry to launch an expedition in 1709, but it was abandoned as European-centric priorities saw the regiments earmarked for Canadian service sail for Portugal instead.³⁴ Vetch had figured prominently in the campaign to convince the mother country to assist in the destruction of the French North American empire. His paper, *Canada Survey'd*, written in 1708, had stated the case for the New Englanders, arguing cogently for the capture of Quebec for its economic and security benefits.³⁵ Vetch had even suggested what forces and equipment would be needed for the task; these were broadly similar to those involved in the 1711 expedition. He emphasised the use of colonials, which was optimistic considering the often poor ability of the colonies to raise troops. Vetch had wanted 1,200 men from the provinces of New York (550), Connecticut (350), the Jerseys (200) and Pennsylvania (100); aided by an unspecified number of Indians, from the Iroquois Confederacy, to strike at Montreal. For the main force attacking Quebec, Vetch had envisaged 3,000 men from New England, New Hampshire and Rhode Island. In addition, Vetch suggested that two regiments of 1,560 regulars be sent from Britain. He also thought that three bomb ketches and thirty guns with fifty

³³ Morgan, W. T., 'Some Attempts at Imperial Co-Operation during the Reign of Queen Anne', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fourth Series, vol. X, (1927), p. 192.

³⁴ Morgan, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711', pp. 3-4.

³⁵ Different versions were published. An easily accessible version can be found in Headlam, Cecil, (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and the West Indies*, (6 vols. (1702-1712), London, 1913-1925) (hereafter cited as *CSPC*), 1708-1709, pp. 41-51, no. 60, 27 July 1708.

rounds of shot each were required.³⁶ However, a different version of the pamphlet did not discuss artillery and required only 'one or two' bomb vessels, 1,500 colonial troops against Montreal and 1,000 colonial militia to join the two regular regiments.³⁷

This influential pamphlet may have been drafted prior to 1708 and before the Act of Union came into effect in May 1707, as the copy sent to the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations on 27 July referred to 'British' advantages, unlike that sent to Secretary of State Sunderland six weeks earlier which instead spoke of 'English' interests. Indeed, the tract draws upon information gained from Vetch's visit to Quebec in 1705, which he used for a similar paper in 1706.³⁸ Whenever it was produced, *Canada Survey'd* was very influential and can be credited with arousing British interest in Canada.

However, almost as soon as war with France had been declared in 1702, the New York Governor, Viscount Cornbury, had discussed the case for preparing for war against the French colonies and their Indian allies, by trading with the latter in order to garner intelligence.³⁹ This is surprising considering Cornbury's general animosity towards the native peoples.⁴⁰ In fact, such engagement only began in 1709 once Cornbury had left office.⁴¹ Stemming from his grasp of the strategic effects of French

³⁶ Library and Archives of Canada, MG11-CO 323, Vetch, Samuel, *Canada Survey'd* (1708).

³⁷ These guns comprised twelve eighteen-pounders, twelve twelve-pounders and six six-pounders, *CSPC*, 1708-1709, p. 50, no. 60, *Canada Survey'd*, 27 July 1708.

³⁸ Alsop, James D., 'Samuel Vetch's 'Canada Survey'd': The Formation of a Colonial Strategy, 1706-1710', *Acadiensis*, vol. XII, no. 1, (Autumn, 1982), pp. 40-41.

³⁹ BLO, Clarendon MSS, vol. 102/40-45, Cornbury's Proposition to the Indians, 15 July 1702.

⁴⁰ Morgan, 'The Five Nations and Queen Anne', p. 176.

⁴¹ Parmenter, Jon, 'After the Mourning Wars: The Iroquois as Allies in Colonial North American Campaigns, 1676-1760', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third series, vol. 64, no. 1, (January 2007), p. 53.

encirclement in North America, Robert Quarry appears to have suggested a direct attack on Quebec as early as 1705.⁴²

Another, unnamed, source had concocted a strategy for taking Quebec that was linked to the West Indies. Stating that the capture of Havana would give the Royal Navy an additional port in the Caribbean, thereby increasing regional security, the forces used could then sail to take Quebec in cooperation with forces raised in New York, New Jersey and New England. The author claimed that the second part of the plan would help to 'recover troops diseased by the services against the French islands', illustrating glaring ignorance of the fact that the Canadian swamps were also infested with malaria and that its summers were as unbearably hot, as its winters were desperately cold.⁴³ Such were the plans submitted by colonials for the capture of New France during the War of the Spanish Succession. Only Vetch's would catch the eye of the ministry in London, however. Still, they must have all been inspired by the events of 1690 and by the consequent realisation that they could only succeed with the help of Britain.

King William's War (the Nine Years War in Europe) first gave New Englanders an opportunity of conquering their continent. Colonel Nicholas Bayard of New York even suggested the importance of merging Canada into a vast British North American empire in 1689.⁴⁴ It is clear that during this period it was the colonials who urged such an expansionist policy and not London. The importance of this strategy was so heartfelt that Massachusetts decided to take the initiative. In May 1690, a Massachusetts force, under Sir William Phips, had set out from Boston and captured

⁴² BLO, Clarendon MSS, vol. 102/157-159, Quarry to Godolphin, 1705 – although indexed as such, its date could not be found, however, it was certainly composed during the earlier years of the war.

⁴³ CSPC, 1702-1703, pp. 179-180, no. 193, no signature, 16 January 1703.

⁴⁴ Morgan, 'Some Attempts at Imperial Co-Operation', p. 174. The English colonies first contemplated French encirclement under James II, Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, p. 35.

Port Royal, which was in too poor a state to wage an effective defence.⁴⁵ Emboldened by this success, the Massachusetts government, along with Phips, decided to follow up this victory with an attack on Quebec itself. The fall of Port Royal had been a catalyst for Quebec, fearing imminent attack, to improve its defences. Quebec was not as yet walled, although it already benefited from being sited on a cliff-edge adjoining the St Lawrence and flanked by the St Charles River. The landward, rear-side of the city facing the Plains of Abraham was unprotected by geography. A straight wooden palisade with intermittent stone towers, serving as redoubts, was built covering that approach, whilst several batteries of eighteen-pounder guns were mounted for Quebec's further defence.⁴⁶

The government in Massachusetts could barely finance this new expedition, but nevertheless secured at least thirty-two vessels (though lacking pilots), which were supplied with three months' provisions.⁴⁷ Phips sailed on 9 August – extremely late in the year. Meanwhile, Massachusetts' simultaneous landward thrust to Montreal had descended into chaos. Major-General Winthrop marched to Montreal with 500 troops and seventy Indians, but turned back at Wood Creek on 15 August after an outbreak of smallpox and the dawning realisation that they were woefully ill-

⁴⁵ Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic*, p. 70; McLay, K. A. J., 'Wellsprings of a 'World War': An Early English Attempt to Conquer Canada during King William's War, 1688-97', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. XXXIV, no. 2, (June 2006), pp. 161-162.

⁴⁶ Chartrand, *French Fortresses in North America*, p. 15.

⁴⁷ Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic*, p. 71; Harding, Richard, 'The Expeditions to Quebec, 1690 and 1711: The Evolution of British Trans-Atlantic Amphibious Power', in *Guerres Maritimes, 1688-1713*, (1996), pp. 201-202; McLay, 'Wellsprings of a 'World War'', pp. 164-165. Of the vessels, 'four of them ships about 100 tons, the rest sorry things'. The largest vessel was the forty-four-gun *Six Friends*, the next largest was the *John and Thomas* of twenty-six-guns, followed by a twenty-four-gun frigate, an eight-gun brigantine and a four-gun sloop. The majority of the remaining vessels were probably unarmed transports, Watkins, Walter Kendall, *Soldiers in the Expedition to Canada in 1690 and Grantees of the Canada Townships* (Society of Colonial Wars in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts), (Boston, 1898), p. 29.

equipped for the task.⁴⁸ Phips eventually arrived at Quebec on 5 October, after wasting valuable time by needlessly stopping at every opportunity to claim a portion of unpopulated enemy territory, and because his want of pilots made the voyage slow and perilous.⁴⁹

Winthrop's retreat enabled the French to concentrate their forces at Quebec.⁵⁰ The city's defences were extremely weak, but the resolve of Governor-General Frontenac could not be doubted when he responded to Phips' call for Quebec's surrender: 'tell your master I will answer him by the mouth of my cannons'. Quebec was reinforced by at least 2,100 regulars, militia and Indians.⁵¹ These faced 1,300 New Englanders under Major Walley, who landed on the Beauport shore on 7 October, driving their opponents back from the landing site.⁵² It is worth allowing one of Walley's officers, Major Savage, to explain their circumstances:

Our men had spent most of their ammunition, having brought only fifteen or eighteen shot ashore with them, and two biscuits apiece. The reason was that we expected the small vessels to bring us everything that night. We had about five men killed, and twenty wounded in this skirmish...About midnight they sent us ashore six eight-pounder field-pieces, which we knew not what to do with, for the place was marshy with several small gullies to be crossed. They sent us also half a barrel of powder—you may judge how poor an allowance for 1,200 men—and no provisions. No sooner were we engaged at our landing than our four big vessels

⁴⁸ McLay, 'Wellsprings of a 'World War'', p. 164; Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic*, pp. 72-73, states 1,000 men and 1,500 Indians.

⁴⁹ Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic*, p. 72; Harding, 'The Expeditions to Quebec', pp. 201-202.

⁵⁰ McLay, 'Wellsprings of a 'World War'', p. 164.

⁵¹ Chartrand, *French Fortresses in North America*, pp. 16-17.

⁵² 1,000 others could not be landed because of sickness. Richmond, Herbert (edited by Hughes, E. A.), *The Navy as an Instrument of Policy, 1558-1727*, (Cambridge, 1953), p. 270, divulged 2,300 land forces were involved, whilst Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic*, pp. 73-74, states only 1,300 landed 'in view of the ravages of fever and disease'. A Boston minister stated Phips commanded 2,500 men, Fortescue, J. W., (ed.), *CSPC*, (2 vols. (1685-1692), London, 1899-1901), 1689-1692, pp. 368-369, no. 1239, 12 December 1690. McLay discusses this point with further contemporary sources in 'Wellsprings of a 'World War'', p. 173, n. 50.

weighed anchor, contrary to orders, and fell to battering the town. They had spent the best part of their ammunition by the time they got back, and the Admiral [Phips] was forced (so they say) to slip his anchor and cable. We had several skirmishes while ashore, but little harm done. Prisoners tell us that if we had come four days earlier, we should have found but 600 people in the town: but our long voyage up the river gave them warning, so that they had now 3,000 men in the town and 800 in the swamp by our side. We often sent on board to get victuals, for we found little ashore, and at last they told us that they had no more ammunition and sent us a biscuit apiece, with orders to re-embark.⁵³

A retreat necessitated by a lack of food and ammunition indicates just how poorly planned the venture was. Also, cold and smallpox had begun to take their toll. Phips had attempted to divert the French by sailing his four largest vessels (mere frigates and sloops) to attack the lower town of Quebec. This effort brought only damage to the hulls of the ships from the enemy's cannon and Walley's exhausted force had re-embarked by 11 October.⁵⁴

Shortly after, a terrible storm inflicted huge damage to Phips' fleet. At least three vessels were destroyed and those that survived took many weeks to reach Boston, having been widely dispersed by the storm.⁵⁵ One anonymous writer said that the storm killed over 400 men⁵⁶ and, as of 3 December 1690, eight ships with 500 men were still missing.⁵⁷ Four vessels were actually lost, along with their crews and the soldiers that they carried.⁵⁸ The author accurately summed up the New Englanders' situation, 'we are undone for want of help from England, and the great

⁵³ *CSPC*, 1689-1692, pp. 385-386, no. 1314, Major Savage to his brother, 2 February 1691.

⁵⁴ Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic*, p. 74; Harding, 'The Expeditions to Quebec', p. 202.

⁵⁵ Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic*, p. 75.

⁵⁶ *CSPC*, 1689-1692, no. 1313, pp. 384-385, extracts of letters, 2 February 1691, letter of 8 December 1690.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 384-385, no. 1313, extracts of letters, 2 February 1691, letter of 3 December 1690.

⁵⁸ Harding, 'The Expeditions to Quebec', p. 203.

author of all our mischief is about to sail to ask for it [Phips consequently lobbied for further attempts against Quebec].⁵⁹ In our expedition to Port Royal we kept bad faith, and our perfidy has been retaliated on us in Canada by a shameful overthrow'.⁶⁰ In order to succeed at Quebec, it was realised that the limited assets of Massachusetts were not enough. Money and resources from England was essential for success. Meanwhile, the French commissioned investigations into their defences, with one suggestion being the construction of two galleys to be used as picket boats.⁶¹ They realised that if they sat idly by, then their colony would be conquered.

In 1693, Rear-Admiral Sir Francis Wheler commanded an expedition that would see him sail to the Caribbean and thence to North America in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to strike at Quebec. He found that the colonials had not prepared sufficiently for his arrival and so turned his attention to Newfoundland, which he found to be too strong. The expedition was abandoned.⁶² Ironically, Wheler did not receive the help he required from Phips (despite his lobbying) to make the expedition a success.⁶³ The lone victory at Port Royal was soon reversed as it was retaken by the French in 1691 because Massachusetts did not have the resources to occupy it.⁶⁴ The Treaty of Ryswick confirmed it as a French possession in 1697.⁶⁵

The outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession (or Queen Anne's War to the colonials) provided another opportunity to rid the English colonists of their

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 198, 203; McLay, K. A. J., 'Sir Francis Wheler's Caribbean and North American Expedition, 1693: A Case Study in Combined Operational Command during the Reign of William III', *War in History*, vol. XIV, no. 4, (2007), p. 403.

⁶⁰ *CSPC*, 1689-1692, pp. 384-385, no. 1313, extracts of letters, 2 February 1691, letter of 31 December 1690.

⁶¹ O'Callaghan, E. B. (ed.), *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, (Albany, 1855), V, pp. 510-512, 'Measures recommended for the better defence of Canada' (1691).

⁶² Richmond, *The Navy as an Instrument of Policy*, pp. 270-271.

⁶³ McLay 'Sir Francis Wheler's Caribbean and North American Expedition', p. 403.

⁶⁴ Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic*, p. 70.

⁶⁵ Daigle, 'Acadia', p. 19.

northern adversaries. They were no doubt aware that they needed the backing of the English state in order to achieve their goal of an America free of French influence.⁶⁶ The resources and military manpower of the colonies were simply not sufficient to take and hold their objectives in the north; three unsuccessful attempts were made to take Port Royal alone during the war. Any dreams of imitating the success of 1690 and taking the fight to Quebec were shattered by the evident improvements in French defences.

Cooperation with the mother country was further necessitated by the amateurish nature of the New Englanders. Whilst enthusiastic in taking the fight to the French in Canada, those that volunteered for such operations quickly became disillusioned. Many had volunteered to fight the Canadians, to plunder and destroy settlements, but not to conquer.⁶⁷ These colonists were concerned with retaliation for French or Indian incursions on their territory. They were willing to leave their homes, families and farms for short periods to gain vengeance, profit and excitement, but were unwilling to do the real work of soldiering. The wearying monotony of garrisoning a fort for months on end, in the face of a hostile population, was not what they volunteered for. Occupying Port Royal was not what these men had envisaged and with the end of the campaigning season in 1690, they were intent on returning to their farms and families. The freedom-loving colonial liked to do his bit on his own terms, but the work of extending an empire carved from New France was a job for professionals without local ties and interests. Such a plan needed to be driven by a common policy of the colonial governors with the ministry in London. This was demonstrated by the further attempts on Port Royal, which was a minor port lacking

⁶⁶ Harding, 'The Expeditions to Quebec', p. 201.

⁶⁷ Plank, Geoffrey, *An Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign Against the Peoples of Acadia*, (Philadelphia, 2001), p. 45; Harding, 'The Expeditions to Quebec', p. 200.

in serious defences, but which posed a significant challenge to the inexperienced colonial forces. Governor Dudley of Massachusetts had first suggested an attack on Port Royal in 1702. He argued that it would free Massachusetts to contribute to the war in the West Indies.⁶⁸ This was ambitious strategic thinking by a man concerned with the running of but one of the American colonies. Expeditions against Port Royal were mounted in 1704, twice in 1707, and 1710.⁶⁹

Only 500 Bostonians mounted the 1704 attack, which utterly failed.⁷⁰ It was probably attempted in response to the Deerfield raid earlier in the year. Both expeditions of 1707 reaffirmed the need for British backing, as persistence could not wear the French down.⁷¹ Port Royal was no longer the easy prey it had been in 1690; nevertheless, Dudley had decided to flatter the public's desire to 'go and destroy that nest of hornets'.⁷² The resources of New England could only produce a little over 1,000 men for the first 1707 operation.⁷³ Dudley's own words best described the ineffectiveness of that colonial force:

I equipped 1,000 musketeers and put them on board proper transports...in June they landed upon Port Royal headland...they found it impracticable to bring up any great cannon, nor had I any mortars to supply them with, more than two small ones of fifty weight the shot, very unequal to the enemies for number or bigness, whereupon they burnt all the town home to the fort gate and all the depending settlements, and destroyed their cattle, 1,000 horned beast, and sheep and hogs to a far greater number, and came off the ground sooner than I intended, upon which I stopped them in their return, and reinforced them and made them go upon the ground

⁶⁸ Alsop, 'Samuel Vetch's 'Canada Survey'd'', p. 51.

⁶⁹ Daigle, 'Acadia', p. 21.

⁷⁰ Chartrand, René, *Colonial American Troops, 1610-1774*, (Oxford, 2002), II, p. 9.

⁷¹ Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 6.

⁷² Winsor, Justin, (ed.), *The Memorial History of Boston, including Suffolk County, Massachusetts, 1630-1880*, (Boston, 1886), II, p. 104.

⁷³ Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic*, pp. 85-86; Peckham, Howard, *The Colonial Wars, 1689-1762*, (Chicago, 1964), p. 67.

again, and stay there some longer time, rather to show their obedience than in hopes of taking the fort, which is a very regular work of forty pieces of cannon.⁷⁴

This attempt was followed that August with another equally ineffective expedition. Port Royal had been strengthened and the Massachusetts men withdrew after their fifteen-day siege had inflicted only three French casualties.⁷⁵ The fort at Port Royal had improved significantly since Phips' day, becoming a Vauban-style earthwork with four bastions as well as an additional battery to tackle any threat from the shore.⁷⁶

This marked the end of independent colonial operations of this scale.

Massachusetts needed the help of Great Britain. However, British imperial strategy, formulated in London, was incredibly defensive. This was despite the display of bellicosity by its American colonists who had rejected an approach by the governor-general of New France, Marquis de Vaudreuil, to establish colonial neutrality.⁷⁷ The ministry had shown little enthusiasm for extra-European projects, believing in most cases that colonial issues should be settled diplomatically at the peace, rather than militarily during the war.⁷⁸ London only grasped the importance of an expedition to Quebec when faced with Vetch's strategic arguments and with a letter by William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, which described the interdependence of the North American colonies with the West Indies and how the French colonies threatened them both.⁷⁹ Also, the French attack and capture, in 1708, of St John's, capital of the

⁷⁴ *CSPC*, 1706-1708, pp. 587-590, no. 1186, Dudley to the Council of Trade and Plantations, 10 November 1707 and 16 February 1708.

⁷⁵ Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic*, p. 86.

⁷⁶ Chartrand, *The Forts of New France in Northeast America*, pp. 14-15.

⁷⁷ Morgan, 'Some Attempts at Imperial Co-Operation', p. 178.

⁷⁸ Alsop, J. D., 'The Age of the Projectors: British Imperial Strategy in the North Atlantic in the War of Spanish Succession', *Acadiensis*, vol. XXI, no. 1, (Autumn, 1991), pp. 30, 51-53; Harding, 'The Expeditions to Quebec, 1690 and 1711', p. 201.

⁷⁹ Morgan, 'Some Attempts at Imperial Co-Operation', p. 181; Alsop, 'The Age of the Projectors', p. 50.

British division of Newfoundland, may have stirred up some colonial enthusiasm in London. This came after the cancellation of an expedition, due to be sent to take Placentia in the French part of Newfoundland, because of poor planning.⁸⁰

Quebec was seriously considered as a strategic target in 1709 as France appeared to be on the brink of collapse. In 1708-1709, France had suffered from a terrible winter that was exacerbated by a famine resulting from a poor harvest.⁸¹ With the armies of the allies encroaching upon its borders, poised for the last strike towards Paris and victory, the Whigs were complacent and over-confident. The ministry thought it prudent to heed the nagging colonials and send an expedition against Quebec. Secretary of State for the Southern Department Sunderland had not shown any particular warmth to *Canada Survey'd*, but his temporary absence in 1708 saw the involvement of Henry Boyle, the northern secretary. The Council of Trade and Plantations had recommended Vetch's paper to the Queen and saw the potential of conquering Canada.⁸² Boyle's enthusiasm for the proposal consequently gave the project much greater support and the organisation of this expedition was well advanced before resources were redirected to more urgent areas.⁸³ 1709 did not turn out as the Whigs and their allies had envisaged, as the Battle of Malplaquet was not the easy victory anticipated against a demoralised and starving army. It was instead a pyrrhic victory, whose casualties outraged much of Europe and severely depleted the strength of Marlborough's army.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic*, p. 90.

⁸¹ Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, p.125; Veenendaal, A. J., 'The War of the Spanish Succession in Europe', in Bromley, J. S. (ed.), *The New Cambridge Modern History, vol. VI, The Rise of Great Britain and Russia, 1688-1715*, (Cambridge, 1970), p. 436.

⁸² CSPC, 1708-1709, pp. 164-165, nos. 221, 221.i, Council of Trade and Plantations to Sunderland and the Queen.

⁸³ Alsop, 'Samuel Vetch's 'Canada Survey'd'', pp. 43-44.

⁸⁴ Black, Jeremy, *Warfare in the Eighteenth Century*, (London, 2002), p. 175; Hibbert, Christopher, *The Marlboroughs: John and Sarah Churchill, 1650-1714*, (London, 2002), pp. 242-243.

The expedition had been authorised as a direct consequence of Vetch's paper and his lobbying in London.⁸⁵ Vetch was issued with orders to prepare the colonies for the expedition and Dudley's services were also mobilised.⁸⁶ The colonials had made huge preparations and were eager for success. This preparation was also indicated in the list of officers that were raised for the effort.⁸⁷ The ministry was to provide five regiments, under Major-General Macartney, combined with a naval squadron.⁸⁸ However, on 11 October, Dudley received news that the British contingent had been diverted to Portugal instead.⁸⁹ This disappointing news was brought by the *Enterprise* on an indirect Atlantic crossing. The decision to cancel had been made on 27 July, but the letter sent to Dudley had not been sent until August, suggesting the little importance placed upon these affairs by the ministry.⁹⁰ It must have taken the colonials by surprise as they had been ready for some time, yet the delay encouraged sickness and desertion, as well as the depletion of their supplies.⁹¹ Further, it has been suggested that the colonial forces, despite their obvious preparations, were not suitable for the mission because of an inadequate logistical

⁸⁵ The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 'Instructions of Queen Anne to Col. Samuel Vetch, for the Organization of a Colonial Contingent for the Conquest of Canada, 1708', *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. XXXVIII, no. 3 (1914), p. 336; Alsop, 'The Age of the Projectors', pp. 43-45.

⁸⁶ The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 'Instructions of Queen Anne to Col. Samuel Vetch', Instructions to Vetch and Lovelace, 28 February 1709, pp. 340-345; *CSPC*, 1708-1709, pp. 230-232, no.387, Instructions to Vetch and Lovelace, 1 March 1709; The National Archives (hereafter cited as TNA), CO 5/898/8, Sunderland to Dudley, 28 April 1709.

⁸⁷ Alsop, J. D., 'The Distribution of British Officers in the Colonial Militia for the Canadian Expedition of 1709', *Journal for the Society of Army Historical Research*, vol. LXV, (1987), p. 120.

⁸⁸ BLO, Clarendon MSS, vol. 102/202-204, Vetch to Lovelace, 30 April 1709; Anon., *The history and proceedings of the House of Commons from the Restoration to the present time*, (London, 1742), IV, pp. 343-344.

⁸⁹ Morgan, 'Some Attempts at Imperial Co-Operation', p. 185.

⁹⁰ Peckham, *The Colonial Wars*, p. 70.

⁹¹ McCully, Bruce T., 'Catastrophe in the Wilderness: New Light on the Canada Expedition of 1709', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third series, vol. XI, no. 3 (July, 1954), p. 443.

system and poor quality troops.⁹² Still, considerable disappointment was felt across the Atlantic as the mother country had once again neglected its colonies, which had put considerable effort into raising five regiments of provincial troops for the expedition. The perceived apathy of the ministry had already convinced the colonials to send a permanent agent to London, Jeremiah Dummer, to lobby and correspond on their behalf.⁹³ It was likely that the Whig ministry, mostly uninterested in North American campaigning anyway, was responding to French suggestions of peace negotiations, which could result in the acquisition of Canada by diplomatic means.⁹⁴

Vetch's plan in *Canada Survey'd* had desired the British force to be at Boston by early May at the very latest, but the preliminary peace conference of 1709 delayed its dispatch.⁹⁵ As an Edinburgh man and veteran of the infamous Darien fiasco, the idealistic Vetch had proposed that the force should be solely comprised of Scots, in the hope that it would attract hardy settlers to establish a successful Scottish colony in Acadia.⁹⁶ However, a new figure eventually emerged to champion the colonies' interests. Colonel Francis Nicholson would rise to dominate the military proceedings of the colonies. He had wide experience of fighting in Europe and at Tangier before serving as a lieutenant-governor of both New York and Virginia.⁹⁷ Nicholson then ingratiated himself in colonial political life and became involved with Vetch's plans for the conquest of Canada.

⁹² This has been surmised by a contemporary account of the army at Wood Creek, probably by Robert Livingston, New York's Secretary of Indian affairs, McCully, 'Catastrophe in the Wilderness', pp. 444-446.

⁹³ Alsop, 'The Age of the Projectors', p. 49; Peckham, *The Colonial Wars*, p. 70.

⁹⁴ Leach, *Roots of Conflict*, p. 29.

⁹⁵ Alsop, 'Samuel Vetch's 'Canada Survey'd'', p. 53.

⁹⁶ Alsop, 'The Age of the Projectors', p. 43; Morgan, *Some Attempts at Imperial Co-Operation*, pp. 177, 182-184; Waller, 'Vetch, Samuel (1668-1732)', *DCB*, (II, 1701-1740). A Scottish fort had been established in Acadia 1629-1632 when it was taken by the French, Chartrand, *The Forts of New France in Northeast America*, p. 13.

⁹⁷ Webb, Stephen Saunders, 'The Strange Career of Francis Nicholson', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third series, vol. XXIII, no. 4 (October, 1966), pp. 515, 521-522, 526.

In order to sustain enthusiasm for the capture of Canada, the colonial governors sent five sachems to London in 1710, with Nicholson and Mayor Schuyler of Albany.⁹⁸ This visit came when power was shifting in Britain. These Indian ‘kings’ became a symbol of Tory blue-water ambitions, raising the importance of the colonies in British grand strategy.⁹⁹ Significantly, the visit also cemented relations with the Iroquois Confederacy.¹⁰⁰ Such a display in London must have also raised public awareness of North American affairs. Whilst possibly influencing the incoming Tories, it did not create an atmosphere that caused a sudden renewed interest in Canadian matters, as a new expedition for 1710 had been decided upon before their arrival.¹⁰¹

After the disappointment of 1709, the wary colonials did not adequately prepare for British aid the following year.¹⁰² Contrary to all expectations, a small British force was dispatched across the Atlantic in 1710 as the unnecessary expense to which the colonies had been put prompted the ministry to repair relations.¹⁰³ This force was led by Commodore George Martin and came in the form of three line-of-battle ships, two frigates and a bomb vessel, as well as 500 marines.¹⁰⁴ Combined with five regiments from New England they decided to attack Port Royal, which was

⁹⁸ Only four arrived as one died on the voyage. Nicholson had been sent earlier. Schuyler was the mayor of Albany and raised a company during Queen Anne’s War, Morgan, ‘The Five Nations and Queen Anne’, pp. 178-179.

⁹⁹ Hinderaker, Eric, ‘The “Four Indian Kings” and the Imaginative Construction of the First British Empire’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third series, vol. LIII, no. 3, (July 1996), p. 489.

¹⁰⁰ TNA, CO 5/898/13, Sachems to Great Queen, 20 July 1710.

¹⁰¹ Hinderaker, ‘The “Four Indian Kings”’, p. 519.

¹⁰² Morgan, ‘Some Attempts at Imperial Co-Operation’, p. 190.

¹⁰³ Leach, *Roots of Conflict*, p. 30.

¹⁰⁴ The ships were the *Dragon* (50); *Falmouth* (50); *Chester* (50); *Lowestoft* (32); *Feversham* (36); and the *Star* bomb vessel. Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic*, p. 91; Almon, John, *A New Military Dictionary: or, The field of war...*, (London, 1760), under heading of *Annapolis Royal*, includes the galley of Massachusetts; Burchett, Josiah, *A Complete History of the Most Remarkable Transactions at Sea*, (London, 1720), p. 766; Nicholson’s instructions say 500 marines, Nicholson, Francis ‘Journal’ in Nova Scotia Historical Society, *Report and Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society for the Year 1878*, (Halifax, 1879), I, (hereafter cited as Nicholson, ‘Journal’) p. 61.

the only viable target for such a small force. Massachusetts, again shouldering the greater part of the colonial effort, bore a large and disproportionate cost, raising two of the New England regiments and sending its *Province Galley* along with the expedition.¹⁰⁵ Vetch was adjutant-general to General Nicholson as commander in chief, who held the power to award commissions.¹⁰⁶ They sailed from Boston on 18 September, arriving at Port Royal on the 24th.¹⁰⁷ The 300 French defenders were hopelessly outnumbered. British and colonial troops were aided by the navy's bomb ketch which sent several shells and carcasses into the fort each night when the weather was suitably calm.¹⁰⁸ This led to much correspondence between Nicholson and the French commander, Governor Subercase, over its distressing impact upon the ladies of the town.¹⁰⁹ After a valiant defence, the articles of capitulation were drawn up on 2 October, allowing Subercase to march out with the full honours of war.¹¹⁰ The day before, the surrounding British artillery had pierced the walls of the fort.¹¹¹

After its capture, Port Royal was renamed Annapolis Royal in honour of the Queen and it was soon mapped by its conquerors.¹¹² Vetch was left there to govern, where his garrison began to succumb to disease, death, desertion and boredom.¹¹³ As the scourge of coastal New England fell in October, it was far too late in the year to follow up such a victory at Quebec – but this was still seriously considered. The Cabinet had met in July 1710 to discuss such an eventuality. The Lords

¹⁰⁵ CSPC, 1710-1711, pp. 29-30, no. 81.iii, Dudley to Council of Trade and Plantations, *Account of charges accruing to the Massachusetts Bay, from the intended expedition to Canada*, 31 January 1710.

¹⁰⁶ Nicholson and Vetch normally held the commission of colonels, Dalton, Charles, (ed.), *English Army Lists and Commission Registers, 1661-1714*, (London, 1904), VI, p. 287; 289-290.

¹⁰⁷ Nicholson, 'Journal', pp. 64-65.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-69.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 69-75.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹¹² TNA, MPG 1/274, Plan of Annapolis Royal, October 1710.

¹¹³ Leach, *Roots of Conflict*, p. 31.

Commissioners of the Admiralty had accompanied Dummer, the colonial agent, and three sailing masters to Cabinet, to give an account of the ‘seasons in the West Indies especially relating to Boston in New England and the River Canada [St Lawrence]’. They had determined that Boston lay 200 leagues from the mouth of the St Lawrence, with Quebec being 100 leagues upriver. Whilst not precise, this was a fair estimate, the actual distances being longer. September and October were identified as being the best months to sail upriver to gain the advantage of the winds. It was also estimated that the St Lawrence was a league and a half broad as far as Quebec, with nineteen fathoms of water, whilst it would take seven weeks to journey to Boston and a further ten days onwards voyage to Quebec with a fair wind.¹¹⁴ This made the journey sound like a long but easy passage and ignored the difficulties of sailing on the St Lawrence. Dummer had previously pleaded with the Earl of Dartmouth that it was not too late to send an expedition to Quebec in July 1710, based on his knowledge of Phips’ expedition. He misleadingly stated that Phips’ ‘ships got safe to Boston November 19 [1690]’ knowing this was not the real story.¹¹⁵

Viscount Shannon was appointed to command a potential expedition to Quebec.¹¹⁶ He was due to rendezvous with Commodore Martin, but he did not leave England.¹¹⁷ Three men-of-war were given orders to sail for Canada; however, the expedition was abandoned at the end of August.¹¹⁸ The reason given to the colonial governors was that contrary winds and ‘other important services which intervened’ had prevented its departure and it was then too late to dispatch. Nicholson and Vetch

¹¹⁴ Staffordshire Record Office (hereafter cited as SRO) D(W) 1778/V/188/7-8, Cabinet minutes, 9 and 11 July 1710.

¹¹⁵ *CSPC*, 1710-1711, pp. 127-128, no. 290, Dummer to [Dartmouth?], 6 July 1710.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 134, no. 301, Shannon’s commission, 13 July 1710, and pp. 134-136, no. 302, Shannon’s instructions, 13 July 1710.

¹¹⁷ Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic*, p. 90.

¹¹⁸ TNA, ADM 1/4094/97, Dartmouth to Admiralty, 7 August 1710.

were told that sufficient troops could not be spared.¹¹⁹ Details are sketchy, but Shannon was appointed to command five regiments which embarked upon transports at Portsmouth in October, which was far too late in a European campaigning season, let alone a Canadian one. They were again stood down when it was deemed too late in the season to make an attempt against Quebec and were instead sent to Spain.¹²⁰ The confusion over its dispatch may have been a result of the change of ministry which occurred that August.

The prospect of sending such an expedition had been the subject of much discussion. Marlborough and Lord High Treasurer Godolphin were against this venture. They thought it too diversionary from the European war and it was left for the ensuing Tory ministry to revitalise the project.¹²¹ Godolphin, illustrating the geographical ignorance of British politicians, referred to Canada as the 'West Indies'.¹²² There was much correspondence between Marlborough and Godolphin which suggested that the expedition would not go ahead in the first place. After the Cabinet meeting with Dummer, Godolphin declared that an expedition was 'not yet absolutely laid aside, but will certainly not go on'.¹²³ On 24 July, Marlborough wrote to Godolphin and to Boyle as he had heard that Shannon's 'expedition to the West Indies is not to proceed'.¹²⁴ The Admiralty reportedly favoured the opinion ascribed

¹¹⁹ *CSPC*, 1710-1711, pp. 183-184, nos. 380 and 381, Dartmouth to Dudley and Nicholson, 31 August 1710.

¹²⁰ TNA, WO 24/75/2, Establishment of Shannon's officers. *CSPC*, 1710-1711, p. 231, no. 428, Shannon to Dartmouth, 16 October 1710. There were 3,265 men under Shannon's command, *ibid.*, p. 231, no. 430, Shannon to Dartmouth, 16 October 1710.

¹²¹ Snyder, Henry, L., *The Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, (Oxford, 1975), III, p. 1484, Marlborough to Godolphin, 5 May 1710.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 1467 n. 9.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 1564, Godolphin to Marlborough, 11 July 1710.

¹²⁴ Murray, George, (ed.), *The Letters and Dispatches of John Churchill, First Duke of Marlborough, from 1702 to 1712*, (London, 1845), V, p. 88, Marlborough to Boyle, 4 August 1710; Snyder, *The Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, III, p. 1578, Marlborough to Godolphin, 24 July 1710.

to a Captain Dallaval that it should not go ahead.¹²⁵ This suggests that there was little intention in sending an expedition to Quebec until the Tories acquired office in the late summer, when Shannon was put in command of his troops.

The 1710 capture of Port Royal nevertheless finally provided a success in Queen Anne's War as it used the combined resources of Britain and its colonies, rather than those of New England alone. Yet it did not receive adequate recognition in Britain. When one colonial, Colonel William Taylor, complained to the Queen that he had not received his pay, the Secretary at War could not determine what authority raised his regiment, what funds were to pay for it, nor what establishment it was put on. Taylor's petition declared that he had provided for his regiment at some personal expense.¹²⁶ The case is strange as Taylor was listed to command the Massachusetts militia in 1709,¹²⁷ and he was the person chosen to seek the surrender of Port Royal on 1 October.¹²⁸ These costs were not included in another sum earmarked to pay for the officers and their various charges.¹²⁹ Although inconsistencies in pay were common enough in Europe, this would have served to further strain colonial relations with Britain. The capture of Port Royal was nevertheless what New England had dreamed of for years, but it should be made clear that Subercase was outnumbered five to one, whilst his fort was a crumbling outpost of French power that had not received any supplies for three years.¹³⁰ Quebec would be a different matter.

¹²⁵ SRO, D(W) 1778/V/188/11, Cabinet minutes, 30 July 1710.

¹²⁶ TNA, CO 5/898/18, Dudley to [?], 20 November 1710; TNA, SP 41/3/249, Granville to the Queen, 10 April 1711.

¹²⁷ Alsop, 'The Distribution of British Officers in the Colonial Militia for the Canadian Expedition of 1709', p. 120.

¹²⁸ Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, VI, p. 285.

¹²⁹ TNA, SP 41/4/208, 'Account of some extraordinary charges of war'.

¹³⁰ Grenier, John, *The Far Reaches of Empire: War in Nova Scotia, 1710-1760*, (Oklahoma, 2008), p. 15; the fort was in a ruined condition, Governor Vetch to British Minister, Nova Scotia Historical Society, *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society for the Year 1884*, (Halifax, 1885), IV, pp. 99-104.

Operations against Quebec reveal the problems in sending a military force across great distances into a completely alien environment. Problems stemmed from extended supply lines, the unfamiliar geography of the New World and the culture shock for 'enlightened' Europeans trained in the formal style of warfare common to Europe. The strategic challenges faced by commanders of such expeditions were huge. Quebec's remoteness and comparatively small population does not mean that a simple siege was all that was required. It would be an operation in need of immense planning and a colossal allocation of resources precisely because of its remoteness. A siege was necessary as Quebec was a semi-fortified city, but an attacking force would also need to prepare against attacks by irregulars from the surrounding forests. Therefore, such a force would have to be quite substantial and sustained over a long period of time. It would have to be transported 3,000 miles from England, protected by a considerable squadron of warships, before sailing up the treacherous and uncharted waters of the River St Lawrence, arriving within range of the enemy's artillery in order to perform an amphibious landing. Meanwhile, a logistical chain, stretching over thousands of miles, would have to be maintained. In the early eighteenth century this would have been a daunting task even if Britain were not simultaneously engaged in large-scale commitments on the European continent. To plan for such an attack, a reasonable estimate of Quebec's defences had to be made. Prior to 1711 only a handful of British colonials had even visited the city, resulting in General Hill complaining that 'the accounts we have had of the strength and situation of the town of Quebec, [differed] so much from one another'.¹³¹

¹³¹ TNA, CO 5/9, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 338, Hill to Dartmouth, 31 July 1711.

Gradual improvements had been made at Quebec over preceding years. After Phips' expedition the Royal Battery was constructed at the waterfront with gun embrasures for twenty-four- and eighteen-pounder cannon (eleven of which were located at this battery in 1711).¹³² In 1710 new works had been authorised given the resurgent threat posed by the fall of Port Royal.¹³³ Still, despite Quebec's importance these works were ad-hoc in nature. The French had previously neglected its fortifications; huge costs and meddling from Versailles saw slow progress on the improvement of its defences.¹³⁴ Its walls were only completed in 1690, just before Phips' arrival. These walls were simply a wooden palisade linked by eleven redoubts to cover the weak and exposed western side, and did not even include a ditch.¹³⁵ Quebec's eastern and southern sides were protected by cliffs. The only attacks that were envisaged by Governor-General Frontenac were by Indians, which was why palisades were deemed sufficient for defence. Phips' attack ensured that 'European style' military architecture' was built at Quebec when in 1693 the palisades were incorporated into earthworks. Quebec's defences were further improved with additional batteries built and strengthened, and stonework redoubts and strong points established. Batteries were also established at Lévis across the river from the city.¹³⁶

Fortifying Quebec came at huge expense. The masonry enceinte that Engineer Levasseur desired was opposed by the intendant, Raudot, who thought it was more suitable to Flanders than Quebec. His reasons were threefold: firstly he thought siege warfare was 'practically impossible' in such a place; secondly, the Canadian campaigning season was relatively short; thirdly, he envisaged the British and

¹³² Chartrand, *French Fortresses in North America*, p. 18.

¹³³ Charbonneau; Desloges; and Lafrance, *Québec the Fortified City*, pp. 120-126.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, chapters 1 and 4 *passim*.

¹³⁵ Funds were given in 1691 to further improve these defences, *ibid.*, p. 34, 118.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 40, 303.

colonials would not have sufficient resources to take Quebec in any case.¹³⁷ In 1711, the defences at Quebec were unfinished and had not been constructed with any sort of coherent purpose. Although some defences were strong, others were intended to be only temporary. They would still pose a challenge for any attacker, but Quebec had many chinks in its armour. In response to the threat posed by Macartney's expedition of 1709, the landward defences were hastily improved with 300-600 men working daily to strengthen them.¹³⁸

Dudley had suggested forces to be sent in the 1708 campaign season, to capture Port Royal or Quebec, before the publication of Vetch's paper. He passed on his own intelligence as to its strength:

Quebec, upon Canada River, is a fortified town, where the French General resides, has in it a regiment making about 500 regular forces; the towns of Montreal, Trois-Rivieres and other French settlements, who make in the whole about 3,000 men, and so distant and divided to 300 miles at least, that they can be no assistants to each other, unless they leave the whole country void. These settlements have no manner of shipping, except a few fishing boats of no force, but only once a year in August, one frigate usually comes from Placentia with two store ships for their year's supply.¹³⁹

It is unknown where Dudley's sources originated, but it is fortunate that Major John Livingston served with the expedition to Port Royal in 1710. He was sent by Nicholson, accompanied by a French representative, to Quebec to inform Governor-

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹³⁸ Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 264, Lloyd to Merit, 13 November 1709.

¹³⁹ *CSPC*, 1706-1708, no. 1186.i, pp. 590-592, Dudley to the Council of Trade and Plantations, 16 February 1708.

General Vaudreuil of the British success in Acadia.¹⁴⁰ Journeying along the icy Penobscot River, Livingston arrived at Quebec on 6 December 1710 after seven weeks of travel. He celebrated Christmas there amongst English prisoners, followed by dinner with Vaudreuil. He remained until 10 January 1711 when he left for Boston accompanied by French envoys. This arduous 400 mile journey took the same route as the land expeditions to Montreal in both 1690 and 1711, but he had not experienced the sailing route on the St Lawrence.

Livingston finally arrived at Boston on 23 February 1711. His movements were not restricted at Quebec, allowing him to make a reconnaissance of its fortifications and also the wider defences of New France as he travelled back to Boston. In Quebec alone, Livingston found that there were mounted eighty-nine ‘great’ guns, as well as eleven ‘pateraros’¹⁴¹ and two mortars. These were manned by 250 militia and 150 regulars – a small force. Yet, as he scouted the French lands to the west and south, he calculated that the French had a further 3,670 men and 830 natives to call upon for the defence of Quebec, a remarkably similar number of men who served in the seven regiments of the British Army embarked on Rear-Admiral Walker’s fleet.¹⁴²

Livingston’s reconnaissance was the latest intelligence that could be useful for the 1711 expedition. Whilst at Boston, Vetch, oblivious that an expedition was then being assembled, had written to London of his intention to send Livingston to

¹⁴⁰ Three Indians went with them. *CSPC*, 1710-1711, pp. 371-386, no. 673, Livingston’s journal, 15 October 1710 – 23 February 1711; Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, VI, p. 289; Nova Scotia Historical Society, I, p. 100; Nova Scotia Historical Society, I, Livingston’s passport, pp. 96-97.

¹⁴¹ ‘Pedrero, or Patero, a small piece of ordnance, generally used on board ships, to discharge stones, broken iron, or partridge shot upon an enemy attempting to board’, Anon, *A Dictionary explaining the most difficult terms made use of in fortification, Gunnery, and the whole compass of the military art*, (Dublin, 1747), p. 30.

¹⁴² TNA, CO 42/13/7, Livingston’s account.

disseminate the information he had acquired.¹⁴³ However, Livingston did not embark upon this transatlantic journey because of bad weather.¹⁴⁴ It is fortunate that this valuable information remained in the Americas, as it was likely that it would have arrived in England after Walker's departure to Boston. Livingston and Vetch had an interesting connection. They were brothers-in-law and, during the early stages of the war, were involved in an illicit trade with the French colonies by using Livingston's sloop.¹⁴⁵ This presented an unusual situation whereby the pair, trading illegally with the enemy and even selling small arms, were also the foremost advocates of the British conquest of Canada.

Vetch's illegal trading at Quebec provided dated knowledge from 1705 or 1706 of the enemy's disposition.¹⁴⁶ In his tract, he declared that there were twenty-eight companies of French troops stationed in Canada, with three of those at Quebec 'who seldom exceed thirty men a company' whilst perhaps another 300 men could be raised. He also stated that there were six and seven companies respectively at Trois-Rivieres and Montreal, and three companies at various forts 'upon the frontiers of Albany', allowing for a total of 570 regular soldiers in the vicinity of Quebec.¹⁴⁷ The artillery defences of Quebec were described as consisting of the shore battery with six eighteen-pounders; a battery of twenty guns, no larger than twelve-pounders; and a

¹⁴³ Kenney, James, F., 'A British Secret Service Report on Canada, 1711', *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. I, (March, 1920), p. 49.

¹⁴⁴ *CSPC*, 1710-1711, p. 526, no. 855, Livingston to Nicholson, 25 May 1711; Krugler, John David, 'Livingston, John (1680-1719/20)', *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (hereafter cited as *DCB*), (II, 1701-1740).

¹⁴⁵ Alsop, 'Samuel Vetch's 'Canada Survey'd'', p. 39; Krugler, 'Livingston, John', *DCB*, (II, 1701-1740).

¹⁴⁶ Judging from the publication date of *Canada Survey'd* (1708) and that it may have been written in 1707, in which Vetch states 'when I was there about two years ago', *CSPC*, 1708-1709, p. 44, no. 60, *Canada Survey'd*, 27 July 1708; and Waller, G. M., 'Vetch, Samuel (1668-1732)', *DCB*, (II, 1701-1740), which asserts that Vetch's trading ceased in 1706.

¹⁴⁷ Vetch's estimate of thirty men per company appears correct as this tallies with the peacetime strength at Quebec in 1700, Charbonneau; Desloges; and Lafrance, *Québec the Fortified City*, p. 254.

stone redoubt with six small guns in the upper town near to the fortified Governor's residence. He also described a battery on the opposite shore of the river (at Lévis) with eight twelve-pounders placed without any sort of barricade. Vetch did not mention specific numbers of militia that could be raised, nor how many Native Americans could be called upon to aid the French defence.¹⁴⁸ Livingston's report implies that the defences at Quebec had been reinforced over the previous few years.

The accuracy of Livingston's and Vetch's approximations of manpower can be verified by a letter of Vaudreuil's in 1709. 250 regulars were stationed at Quebec, with 100 at Montreal. An unspecified number were also detached to Detroit. Out of a total of 4,850 potential militiamen, including 500 sailors and 500 Indians, 2,350 and 1,000 would defend Quebec and Montreal respectively. The remaining 1,500, composed of younger teenage and elderly males, would protect women and children evacuated to the countryside with their livestock.¹⁴⁹ Livingston reported that 280 officers and soldiers were stationed at Montreal and 150 regulars at Quebec along with a further 250 militia, but he did not travel as far as Detroit. His estimates appear to have been reliable.¹⁵⁰

Sources on the number of cannon at Quebec vary widely, however. A French letter implied that seventy-four cannon could quickly be increased to 100 during

¹⁴⁸ *CSPC*, 1708-1709, p. 44, no. 60, *Canada Survey'd*, 27 July 1708.

¹⁴⁹ Vaudreuil stated that 2,250 men aged from fifteen to seventy lived within a sixty-mile radius of Quebec. Furthermore, the intendant at Quebec, Raudot, estimated in 1709 that the 'active [males of military age]' population of Quebec was 2,500 to 3,000. O'Callaghan, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, IX, p. 838, Vaudreuil to Pontchartrain, 14 November 1709; Charbonneau; Desloges; and Lafrance, *Québec the Fortified City*, p. 257; Osgood, Herbert L., *The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century*, (New York, 1930), I, pp. 439-440.

¹⁵⁰ TNA, CO 42/13/7, Livingston's account. The French had spread about that there were 1,000 regulars and 10,000 militia that could be called upon, TNA, CO 5/898, King's Journal, 9 September 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 333.

1711.¹⁵¹ Major Lloyd, commanding St John's, Newfoundland, until its capture by the French in 1708, was subsequently held prisoner at Quebec.¹⁵² In captivity he sent a letter stating that Canada had a total of 6,000 men for its defence and that Quebec itself had seventy-two cannon, 'which they call 100; it is a very foolish fortification that cannot be defended with less than 20,000 men, it being at least eight or nine miles round, of no strength in several places, though strong in some others'. Lloyd also mentioned that the French had experimented with wood held together with iron at Quebec, which would be set on fire and released into the powerful current of the St Lawrence if enemy ships ever anchored nearby.¹⁵³ Whilst Livingston asserted there were eighty-nine cannon, even seventy-two was a formidable number for the town's defence and corresponds with the French source. Vetch's estimate of forty cannon was probably erroneous, particularly as he was relying upon memory and acting as a merchant, he may not have visited the upper town.

However, some of Lloyd's other details prove to be exaggerated. 20,000 men would certainly have been sufficient for Quebec's defence.¹⁵⁴ Such a number would even have defeated Wolfe in 1759. Also, rather than the 'eight or nine miles round' the fortified area was little more than two miles in circumference and there was certainly not 6,000 men able to defend Canada. It is interesting to note that whilst in

¹⁵¹ Walker, Hovenden, 'A Journal: Or Full Account of the Late Expedition to Canada', appendix, p. 242, Costa Bella to Pontchartrain, 24 July 1711 in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec' (hereafter cited as Walker, 'Journal').

¹⁵² Lloyd commanded the Newfoundland independent company at St John's, composed of eighty-eight men, before the French overwhelmed them with 170 men in a surprise night attack, Quinn, D. B., 'Lloyd, Thomas (d. 1710)', *DCB*, (II, 1701-1740); also Graham says 'he was optimistic [of repelling the French] because he was stupid' and his negligence was mistaken for treachery, *Empire of the North Atlantic*, pp. 90-91; St John's was taken due to his 'carelessness', Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 264, n. 1; Lloyd blamed Vane for his misfortune. Vane was the engineer in King's train in 1711. He was thought a Jacobite and Lloyd said he was a 'cowardly villain' and 'traitor', Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 265, Lloyd to Merit, 13 November 1709.

¹⁵³ Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 265, Lloyd to Merit, 13 November 1709.

¹⁵⁴ Quebec's intendant, Raudot, thought if the engineer Levasseur's works were completed then it would need 10,000 men to defend. This may be an exaggeration also, as he did not want to pay for the defences, Charbonneau; Desloges; and Lafrance, *Québec the Fortified City*, p. 42.

captivity, Lloyd had heard that Macartney was meant to sail to Quebec in 1709 along with a landward thrust to Montreal.¹⁵⁵ As he was in captivity, it can be assumed that the French had similar knowledge and would be prepared for any further attempt.

Despite France not sending any reinforcements, French Canada did everything within its power to combat a potential invasion with the construction of new defences. Fort Chambly was built of stone in 1710 (noted by Lloyd whilst a prisoner) to cover the land route from New York to Montreal and was capable of garrisoning 500 men, armed with forty cannon.¹⁵⁶ Trois-Rivieres, however, had lost its strategic value due to its proximity to Quebec and Montreal. Although it remained a fair size, it retained its obsolete wooden palisade.¹⁵⁷

One final note concerning Major Livingston's Quebec visit: his bravado may have inadvertently alerted the French to a possible invasion of Quebec. Though it may have been the next logical target for the British after taking Acadia in 1710, Livingston, oblivious to how near to the truth he really was, threatened that an army would soon be sent to take Quebec in 1711. The French then began to reinforce their defences by building a new stone battery for six cannon; constructing lodgings at the Cap Diamond redoubt; bomb-proofing the magazines; and closing breaches and open parts of the wall. Further work would be completed if actual news of an expedition was confirmed, namely by increasing the number of cannon embrasures in the upper town and readying smaller calibres of cannon for field use in order to counter the landing of troops.¹⁵⁸ Although defences were gradually improved over the years at

¹⁵⁵ Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 264, Lloyd to Merit, 13 November 1709.

¹⁵⁶ Chartrand, *The Forts of New France in Northeast America*, pp. 28-31; McCully, 'Catastrophe in the Wilderness', p. 441; Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', pp. 264-266, Lloyd to Merit, 13 November 1709.

¹⁵⁷ Chartrand, *French Fortresses in North America*, p. 31.

¹⁵⁸ Walker, 'Journal', appendix, p. 242, Costa Bella to Pontchartrain, 24 July 1711.

Quebec, preparations were accelerated after the reports of the 1709 expedition, the taking of Port Royal and Livingston's visit.

II: The Decision to Dispatch the 1711 Expedition

Whig interest in Quebec had been aroused by Vetch's *Canada Survey'd*, but only half-hearted preparations for its capture had been initiated by the ministry. Only the limited assistance given at Port Royal reversed this trend. Greater enthusiasm was shown by the Tories, however and it was only when St John assumed control of these plans that the British state acted with the determined intention of taking Quebec. Raids, such as that at Deerfield, had caused an outcry in New England that would lead directly to the dispatch of the 1711 expedition to Canada.¹⁵⁹ Whilst Nicholson had superseded Vetch in his military role as colonial commander from 1710, it has been suggested that the reason for this was because of the Tory inclinations of the former.¹⁶⁰ After the capture of Port Royal, Nicholson clamoured for further action. Although it was too late in the season to dispatch Shannon's force, the colonials persisted. The colonial agent and staunch Tory, Jeremiah Dummer, petitioned the Queen 'in compassion to her plantations, to send an armament against Canada' and now it must be seen how St John was able to launch the first British expedition to Quebec.¹⁶¹

Whilst the party struggle created an overwhelming desire for peace amongst the Tories, St John championed the Quebec expedition to his Cabinet colleagues. Not only would it gain him personal glory and advancement, it would divert attention

¹⁵⁹ Steele, Ian K., *Guerillas and Grenadiers: The Struggle for Canada, 1689-1760*, (Toronto, 1969), p. 42.

¹⁶⁰ Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest*, p. 48.

¹⁶¹ Cohen, Sheldon S., 'The Diary of Jeremiah Dummer', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, vol. XXIV, no. 3 (July, 1967), p. 398; Winsor, *The Memorial History of Boston*, p. 106.

from Marlborough, vindicate blue-water strategy and would win Britain an advantage at the peace. St John had been obsessed with keeping the expedition secret despite the fact the French may have expected such a feat, given the aborted expeditions of the previous few years. He tried to secure the Chancellor of the Exchequer's support for the project with flattery in January 1711: 'if it succeeds you will have done more service to Britain in half a year, than the ministers who went before you did in all their administration'.¹⁶² However, Robert Harley was opposed to such an undertaking, as shall become clear; nevertheless, he was in favour of adopting a blue-water policy. This was made plain when Harley wrote into the Queen's speech of 1714 that her subjects should be congratulated on being 'delivered from a consuming land war... [as] our true interest...[is] most formidable by the right application of our naval force'.¹⁶³ Harley could not be convinced to support St John, but other officials assisted in the preparation of the expedition.

The Earl of Dartmouth, as secretary of state for the southern department, should have possessed overall control of such projects, as colonial expeditions were within his remit.¹⁶⁴ Consequently, it was he who was approached by Dummer when he petitioned for the subduing of Canada 'the American Carthage' which may be a factor in his initial involvement.¹⁶⁵ However, this was St John's personal project and he was not going to allow the notional limits of his office to deter him from organising it. Still, Dartmouth was involved in several aspects of the expedition, though he must have been directed by St John. Secretary at War George Granville,

¹⁶² Historical Manuscripts Commission (hereafter cited as HMC), *Report on the Manuscripts of His Grace the Duke of Portland*, IV, pp. 655-656, St John to Harley, 17 January 1711.

¹⁶³ *The Journals of the House of Commons*, XVII, 1711-1714, p. 474, 23 February 1714; Holmes, Geoffrey, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, (second edition, London, 1987), p. 75.

¹⁶⁴ Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, p. 30; Morgan, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711', p. 5.

¹⁶⁵ *CSPC*, 1710-1711, pp. 334-335, no. 579, Dummer to Dartmouth, 3 January 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 267.

was heavily involved with the organisational details, but he operated only as an intermediary – receiving precise instructions from St John for assembling the land forces.¹⁶⁶ Granville did not have a ministerial position; he was essentially a clerk concerning military affairs.¹⁶⁷ Incidentally, Brigadier-General Hill owed his parliamentary seat to Granville, which may have been how St John began his association with him.¹⁶⁸

The Admiralty certainly did not know what was in store, its main contact being the Admiralty secretary, Josiah Burchett, who may even have known more than his masters. There was no political leadership or Cabinet representation in the Admiralty in 1711, leaving St John unhindered in his organisation of the expedition.¹⁶⁹ Another minor figure was John Drummond, a Scottish merchant based in Amsterdam. He became an intermediary between the new Tory administration and Marlborough, to keep the alliance intact whilst peace was negotiated.¹⁷⁰ Further, he mediated between the Tories and the Dutch Grand Pensionary Anthonie Heinsius, after the latter became aware of the secret peace negotiations in 1711.¹⁷¹ Drummond had secured luxury goods for figures including St John and Prince Eugene of Savoy.¹⁷² The merchant had also been linked with James Brydges, who as paymaster-

¹⁶⁶ St John, 'took charge of the war-office as no secretary of state had done since Nottingham', Burton, Ivor F., 'The Secretary at War and the Administration of the Army during the War of the Spanish Succession', (University of London PhD thesis, 1960), p. 259.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-5; Scouller, R. E., *The Armies of Queen Anne*, (Oxford, 1966), p. 67.

¹⁶⁸ Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, p. 264.

¹⁶⁹ Rodger, N. A. M., *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815*, (London, 2004), p. 185.

¹⁷⁰ Barnett, Corelli, *Marlborough*, (Ware, 1999), p. 255.

¹⁷¹ Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, p. 236; Hatton, Ragnhild, 'John Drummond in the War of the Spanish Succession: Merchant turned Diplomatic Agent', in Hatton, Ragnhild and Anderson, M. S. (eds), *Studies in Diplomatic History*, (London, 1970), p. 83.

¹⁷² Colonel Disney, of the 1711 expedition, actually bought the goods for St John and was credited by Drummond, Parke, Gilbert, *Letters and Correspondence, Public and Private, of the Right Honourable Henry St John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke; During the Time He was Secretary of State to Queen Anne...*, (London, 1798), I, p. 11, St John to Drummond, 27 October 1710; McKay, Derek, *Prince Eugene of Savoy*, (London, 1977), p. 197.

general dealt with the accounts of the Canadian expedition.¹⁷³ Drummond was said to have been very honest and deplored those who acquired wealth illegally. He was perhaps unaware of the fraudulent qualities of his contacts, particularly St John and Brydges, who used their positions for profit.¹⁷⁴ St John repeatedly bore responsibility for the expedition and his desire for its success was made clear when he informed Drummond during the summer: 'I am glad to find that whatever guesses curious people may make, there yet appears no more light into the secret of Mr Hill's expedition. As that whole design was formed by me, you will easily imagine that I have a sort of paternal concern for the success of it.'¹⁷⁵

The reasons why the expedition had not been organised to depart earlier were essentially political. St John's enthusiasm for the project was not matched by Harley who made things more difficult without his support.¹⁷⁶ His opposition stemmed from St John's increasing power amongst the High Tory faction and from his alliance with Masham.¹⁷⁷ Preparations had begun, thanks to the authority of a monarch who still retained considerable political power. With Harley's indisposition after Guiscard's assassination attempt on 8 March, St John was able to force his project through with greater speed.¹⁷⁸ He should not have launched the expedition as he did; rather, he should have acquired the proper authority to press ahead with it earlier, before it was too late in the year to be effective. His rationale in continuing his project can be

¹⁷³ Harvey, Edward Léon, 'The Letters and Accounts of James Brydges, 1705-1713', *The Huntington Library Bulletin*, no. 2 (November, 1931), p. 131.

¹⁷⁴ Hatton, 'John Drummond in the War of the Spanish Succession', pp. 76-79.

¹⁷⁵ Parke, *Letters and Correspondence*, I, p. 264, St John to Drummond, 26 June 1711.

¹⁷⁶ HMC *Portland*, V, p. 464, 'The Earl of Oxford's Account of Public Affairs'; Biddle, *Bolingbroke and Harley*, p. 196; Churchill, Winston S., *Marlborough*, (London, 1938), IV, p. 393; Dickinson, H. T., *Bolingbroke*, (London, 1970), p. 85; Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, p. 75; Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*, III, p. 119.

¹⁷⁷ Morgan, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711', p. 9.

¹⁷⁸ Churchill, *Marlborough*, IV, p. 387; Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*, III, pp. 119-120, 143.

summarised in a single point – his ambition, or more specifically, his desire to lead the ministry.¹⁷⁹

The Quebec expedition was St John's means of achieving this and enhancing his political reputation. In order to authorise it he would need to enlist the Queen's support through the manipulation of her favourite, Abigail Masham – an ally and cousin of Harley. To cement an alliance with Abigail, St John appointed her brother, 'Mr Hill the instrument of doing so much honour',¹⁸⁰ to command the Quebec expedition. The fact that Harley opposed it played into St John's hands, winning the backing of Abigail, at the expense of the Chancellor's influence and so the plan was set.¹⁸¹ Abigail, with her brother's interests close at heart, embraced St John and was therefore able to secure the Queen's influence for the authorisation of the expedition before declaring it to the Cabinet.¹⁸² St John always referred to his project as 'Hill's expedition'. It had to be Hill's so that he could curry favour with Abigail and the Queen. Hill was duly appointed as general and commander in chief on 1 March 1711.¹⁸³ This appointment was made over a month before Walker received his commission.¹⁸⁴

Significantly, by February, St John's rift with Harley had already begun and the Chancellor avoided the committee meetings regarding the expedition.¹⁸⁵ When Jeremiah Dummer approached Harley to discuss the New England troop quotas, he

¹⁷⁹ Dickinson, *Bolingbroke*, p. 87; Churchill, *Marlborough*, IV, p. 392.

¹⁸⁰ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Walker, 17 April 1711.

¹⁸¹ Biddle, *Bolingbroke and Harley*, p. 198; Churchill, *Marlborough*, IV, p. 393.

¹⁸² Gregg, Edward, *Queen Anne*, (London, 1980), p. 337.

¹⁸³ Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, VI, p. 20.

¹⁸⁴ Walker 'Journal', p. 91, 6 April 1711.

¹⁸⁵ Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*, III, p. 118; HMC, *Portland*, V, p. 464, 'The Earl of Oxford's Account of Public Affairs', p. 464.

refused to become involved and instead directed Dummer to Dartmouth.¹⁸⁶ Even after his attempted assassination, Harley had asked his brother to inform the president of the council, the Earl of Rochester ‘that it was his dying request that he would advise the Queen that it might be laid aside. This was the unfortunate expedition to Canada’.¹⁸⁷ Harley remained worried by St John’s growing influence over Masham.

Rochester was in very much the same frame of mind as Harley and thought it prudent that, in light of the death in April of Emperor Joseph I, it would be wise to reconsider overall strategy and prevent the Quebec expedition from departing.¹⁸⁸ The balance of power in Europe had completely altered as the new Emperor, Charles VI, would gain both the Spanish and Austrian inheritance – precisely what the Grand Alliance was fighting to deny the French. Shortly before, things were made more complicated as the Dauphin had also died. Rochester had previously been Harley’s eyes and ears at the Quebec meetings that he had refused to attend, ‘as he desired him...to be a means to the Queen to hinder that expedition’.¹⁸⁹ Nevertheless, St John seems to have enjoyed his new status, feigning surprise at Rochester’s efforts to put a halt to his project: ‘[Rochester] surprised me very much last night in Cabinet, when he spoke of stopping Mr Hill, as what might be expedient upon the alteration in public affairs occasioned by the Emperor’s death’.¹⁹⁰ He continued to say that, as Britain was in a worse condition because of this untimely death, then they could only expect a worse peace, therefore, the expedition should proceed without delay. With Harley

¹⁸⁶ Dartmouth may have still been involved in the expedition, though it was unlikely at this point as the ordnance stores had all been acquired. It is interesting that Dummer was not directed to St John. Harley, having not attended the relative meetings, had sent Dummer to Dartmouth because he was the southern secretary, *CSPC*, 1710-1711, p. 405, no. 701, Nicholson to Dartmouth, 3 March 1711.

¹⁸⁷ HMC, *Portland*, V, pp. 654-655, ‘Memoirs of the Harley Family’ (Edward Harley).

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, IV, p. 675, Rochester to Harley, 18 April 1711; Hill, Brian, W., *Robert Harley: Speaker, Secretary of State and Premier Minister*, (New Haven and London, 1988), pp. 150-151.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, V, p. 464, ‘The Earl of Oxford’s Account of Public Affairs’.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, IV, p. 676, St John to Harley, 19 April 1711.

recovering from his wound, Rochester reported, ‘the wind at present stops the troops, no other order was given in that affair’.¹⁹¹ It is apparent that the Cabinet was powerless to stop St John’s scheming having won support from the Queen through Masham, particularly with Harley’s absence from public affairs.

Harley had not hindered the expedition by ignoring it, nor by employing Rochester to do his utmost to dissuade the Queen from allowing it. Furthermore, it has been suggested that Harley favoured a South Sea expedition to complement the South Sea Company’s establishment.¹⁹² This was unlikely, however. Admiral Sir James Wishart had already proposed a similar Anglo-Dutch expedition to attack the French in the East Indies, or the Spanish in the South Sea, which the Dutch rejected.¹⁹³ St John even suggested that, because of this, the Dutch had no right to protest against the sending of the Quebec expedition.¹⁹⁴ Had Harley been more open with his old friend and new rival, then things may have worked out differently.

However, St John was oblivious to events that a large part of the Cabinet were involved in – the secret peace negotiations with France. Harley had deliberately kept St John in the dark about these negotiations. This was more than likely why some of his colleagues were not keen on executing his plans, as St John was becoming more of a divisive character and a ‘party’ man.¹⁹⁵ He had only found out on 26 April, when the entire Cabinet had been informed, that these talks had been taking place since 1710 and was understandably enraged at the discovery. His anger was amplified when it was revealed that Dartmouth, as the other secretary of state, was included in

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, IV, p. 675, Rochester to Harley, 19 April 1711.

¹⁹² Morgan, William Thomas, ‘The South Sea Company and the Canadian Expedition in the Reign of Queen Anne’, *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. VIII, no. 2, (May 1928).

¹⁹³ Davies, J. D., ‘Wishart, Sir James (c. 1659–1723)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004).

¹⁹⁴ Parke, *Letters and Correspondence*, I, pp. 264–265, St John to Drummond, 26 June 1711.

¹⁹⁵ HMC, *Portland*, V, p. 464, ‘The Earl of Oxford’s Account of Public Affairs’; Biddle, *Bolingbroke and Harley*, p. 223.

the ‘inner circle’.¹⁹⁶ St John had been excluded precisely because of his disdain for the allies and his desire for Britain to negotiate an advantageous – and separate – peace.¹⁹⁷ It was feared that St John’s enthusiasm for a Quebec expedition could derail the talks.¹⁹⁸ St John thought it too late, by this time, to halt the expedition – too much expense and effort had been invested in it, especially as it was virtually ready to depart and he finally had the authority to do so. He wanted to prove himself and perhaps enrich himself on the back of its success. The rising opportunity and the realisation that the Emperor’s death was changing European attitudes to the war, enveloped in him a sense of urgency, as was shown in his frantic correspondence with Admiral Walker, urging him to hurry and clear British waters.¹⁹⁹ St John was solely responsible for organising the expedition and was opposed by a critical Cabinet. Parliament had not been consulted, and with the growing schism with Harley, this was blatantly an act of defiance against his mentor.²⁰⁰ Were his expedition to fail, the consequences were potentially disastrous for his career.

St John actually admitted the danger of failure in a letter to Governor Hunter of New York which is worth quoting at length as it reveals, quite uniquely, the degree of hope and emotion he had invested in his project. Firstly, he acknowledged that, if it failed, he had not followed the correct political channels in organising the expedition, as he did not possess much in the way of political support:

¹⁹⁶ HMC, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Bath*, I, pp. 201-202, Shrewsbury to Harley, 26 April 1711; Biddle, *Bolingbroke and Harley*, p. 222; Dickinson, *Bolingbroke*, p. 86; Trevelyan, G. M., ‘The ‘Jersey’ period of the negotiations leading to the Peace of Utrecht’, *English Historical Review*, vol. XLIX, (January, 1934), p. 100.

¹⁹⁷ Hill, B. W., ‘Oxford, Bolingbroke, and the Peace of Utrecht’, *The Historical Journal*, vol. XVI, no. 2 (June, 1973), p. 244.

¹⁹⁸ MacLachlan, A. D., ‘The Road to Peace, 1710-13’, in Holmes, Geoffrey (ed.), *Britain After the Glorious Revolution, 1689-1714*, (London, 1969), p. 207.

¹⁹⁹ Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, p. 78; Trevelyan, *England Under the Stuarts*, p. 487.

²⁰⁰ Biddle, *Bolingbroke and Harley*, pp. 198-199.

It is my favourite project, what I have been driving on ever since I came last into business, what will be an immense and lasting advantage to our country if it succeeds, and what if it fails will perhaps be particularly prejudicial to me, who in the carrying it on hitherto have not been backed by those forms and orders, which are necessary safeguards in a government, where the best designs are converted into crimes, if they want success, and where the worst are very often applauded for no reason but because they have it.

St John should have abided by his own warning here. However, this letter more than any other revealed his own zeal for the attempt on conquering New France. It also illuminates, in all their ignorance and xenophobia, his reasons for persisting in launching the Quebec expedition. First, there were the economic advantages it would offer, although he admitted that he ‘cannot pretend to understand the nature of trade [nor] to be fully informed of the present condition of the Queen’s territories in America’. This implies that this was not foremost in his mind when he concocted the plan. Second was simple patriotic pride for:

if one supposes the French driven out from Canada, and the Queen mistress of the whole continent of North America, such a scene opens itself, that the man who is not charmed with it, must be void of all sense of the honour, of the grandeur, and of the prosperity of his country.

The third and most important reason that he gave in this letter was ultimately political. It was very much Swift’s argument and that of the High Tories in general, which was the reason for his split with Harley and his more moderate course of action:

We have exhausted ourselves with little or no concurrence from any of our allies to support the war in Spain... We have laid forth our utmost strength in the Netherlands, as if the obtaining that barrier was not our remote, but our immediate security. Gifts, loans and subsidies have been scattered from hence through the whole extent of the alliance, as if we were defending provinces of our own, or as if we were ourselves a province to each, and obliged to comply with the demands of the superior state.

Although he may no longer have been a friend to the allies, St John remained an enemy of France. He wanted to end the war quickly and with advantage, and was oblivious to the secret peace negotiations. St John's loyalty to his Queen and his country cannot be questioned. His desire for a successful Quebec expedition was evident:

those who have the honour to serve her [Queen Anne] now are at least as much enemies to France, as those who went before them. *The true application of what I have said is this, that it is now high time to do something in particular for Britain*, by which the enemy will receive as great and as essential a prejudice, as he has done by any of those operations the sole benefit whereof resulted to some of our confederates.²⁰¹

St John's motives were clear. The revelation of the peace negotiations was perhaps a consequence of both the shift of the balance of power with the Emperor's death and the disclosure to Cabinet (in Harley's absence) a month before of the Queen's blessing for the dispatch of the Quebec expedition. This was given on 25 March at St James' Palace when the 'Queen declared the design of the Canada expedition to the Lords and ordered St John to give them an account what

²⁰¹ [My italics] TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Hunter, 6 February 1711.

forwardness the preparations were in for that service'.²⁰² It is unclear how many Cabinet members actually knew about the expedition prior to this announcement. It is likely that the expedition was organised in a secret Cabinet committee to avoid scrutiny by the usual committee.²⁰³ If this was the case, then its membership was unknown, with just a few exceptions. Harley was not involved, his representative being Rochester and both secretaries of state were already busy organising the expedition. It has been suggested that preparations were considered in committee on 18 January 1711, but this is not certain.²⁰⁴

Dudley's ninth instruction, in his orders for preparing the expedition, is enlightening as it revealed: 'We [the Queen] have communicated our resolution [the expedition] only to two of our principal Secretaries of State, and from the necessity of concealing the same we are deprived of the information we might have had [from various departments]'.²⁰⁵ It is known that Dartmouth helped with the acquisition of ordnance stores and naval vessels and, from Dudley's instructions, it is apparent that he knew the details of St John's project. What is unclear is whether he enthusiastically supported St John's efforts, especially as he was also aware of the negotiations with the French. Dartmouth was a moderate Tory and ally of Harley.²⁰⁶ He may have simply been involved because of the office he held and, as Harley did not actively oppose the expedition, he may have delegated responsibilities to Dartmouth. He only prepared a proportionally small part of the expedition, and it seems his involvement ended in February, when St John's split with Harley was

²⁰² SRO, D(W) 1778/V/188/134, Cabinet Minutes, 25 March 1711.

²⁰³ Plumb, J. H., 'The Organization of the Cabinet in the Reign of Queen Anne', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth series, vol. VII, (1957), p. 155.

²⁰⁴ SRO, D(W) 1778/V/188/99, Cabinet Minutes, 18 January 1711; Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, p. 26.

²⁰⁵ TNA, SP 44/213, Dudley's instructions, 6 February 1711.

²⁰⁶ Biddle, *Bolingbroke and Harley*, pp. 25-26.

becoming apparent. In any case, Dartmouth was a rival to St John as he held a more prestigious office, which St John had coveted. Additionally, St John later openly argued with him.²⁰⁷ St John had initially tried to secure Harley's support. When this was not forthcoming, and when it was coupled with the revelation of the peace negotiations, this must have created the most obvious conditions for the schism between the moderation of Harley and Dartmouth on one hand and the High-Tory zeal of St John on the other.

What is clear is that the Queen backed St John, allowing him the authority necessary to execute the expedition and the Cabinet was in no position to halt its progress. It is probable that this was only made possible once St John suggested Hill be its commander, thus gaining the backing of Abigail Masham and consequently the influential support of the Queen. This meant that Harley could not openly oppose the expedition without harming his own relations with Masham and therefore, his own influence over the sovereign.²⁰⁸

III: Conclusion

The 1711 expedition was the result of years of clamouring by the American colonists to secure British help in eradicating the threat of New France. The colonials feared for their security, both at sea and on land, especially after the Deerfield raid. With no help forthcoming from London, inspiration was taken from Phips' 1690 expedition for the colonists to take action themselves. However, the Port Royal expeditions of 1704 and 1707 only proved that the colonials required British assistance to neutralise the French threat. However, until the dissemination of *Canada Survey'd* in 1708, London

²⁰⁷ HMC *Portland*, V, p. 465, 'The Earl of Oxford's Account of Public Affairs'; Biddle, *Bolingbroke and Harley*, p. 224.

²⁰⁸ Morgan, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711', p. 10.

had shown little interest in doing so, believing that colonial affairs should be settled in the diplomatic sphere.

Once Vetch had aroused interest, British North American strategy proved to be inconsistent and illogical – expeditions were hastily assembled then cancelled and targets would vary. Newfoundland was the subject of possible expeditions in 1703 and 1708;²⁰⁹ Quebec then became the target without the prior conquest of either Placentia or Port Royal. The Whig ministry still accorded little importance to the Canadian theatre of war when expeditions to Quebec were cancelled in both 1709 and 1710. These only served to prepare New France for further attacks by improving the defences of Quebec. The limited aid given by Britain in 1710 nevertheless conquered Acadia. Port Royal's capture undoubtedly stirred up enthusiasm for a follow-up success and it was the enthusiasm of St John that ensured the dispatch of an expedition to Quebec in 1711.

The war, however, was almost over. Harley, in opening peace negotiations with the French, saw that such an expedition would be unnecessary and expensive when diplomatic efforts were about to begin. Presumably, preparations for the expedition were initially allowed in order to provide an alternative course of action if the talks failed. As time progressed and circumstances altered, Harley and Rochester clearly favoured abandoning the expedition. There was not much the Cabinet could have done once Queen Anne had sided with St John, however. Still, the deaths of the Dauphin and the Emperor potentially altered the balance of power in Europe, and changed the reasons for fighting. As St John continued organising the expedition, the Cabinet may have hoped that an impending and advantageous peace would not be

²⁰⁹ Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic*, pp. 88-89.

threatened by his project and so revealed the peace talks to him. Nevertheless, St John was adamant that the expedition would go ahead – he was far too close to fulfilling his ambitions to back down at this stage.

CHAPTER 2

THE EXPEDITION'S COMMANDERS

Besides Henry St John, there are two other characters that figure largely in the story of the Quebec expedition. The operational element was dominated by Rear-Admiral of the White Sir Hovenden Walker as it proved to be a primarily maritime affair. It is he who had the most impact upon the expedition and his experiences shall be examined in detail here. St John had entrusted him with the safe convoy of the expedition and Walker has consequently received much of the blame for its failure. Whilst his suitability for the role and his competence has been brought into question since the disaster, it shall be demonstrated that he was more than qualified to command the squadron destined for North American waters. He must, however, take full responsibility for the disaster that occurred in August 1711, although it is difficult to accept that complete blame should lie with him alone.

General John Hill's leadership, as commander in chief of the land forces, has been the subject of some speculation given that his troops did not land at Quebec. However, he must accept a large part of the responsibility for the decision to return home without any further attempt upon Quebec, or indeed any other potential objective. In addition, the quality of his subordinates shall also be considered to show that the force assembled for service in North America was a largely competent and effective one, if tainted by political favouritism.

I: Hovenden Walker

Admiral Walker was a natural choice for this type of operation. Parts of his history are somewhat sketchy and little is currently known about his early naval service. What is certain is that he was ideally suited to convoying vessels to the Americas, as this is what seems to have been his forte throughout his operational career. Walker did not need to possess the fame or combat experience of some of the more famous admirals of his age. What he had done on multiple occasions throughout the war was to take independent command of a naval squadron and convoy it safely across the Atlantic Ocean, sometimes accompanying numerous trading vessels. Walker was especially familiar with the Caribbean. In the early eighteenth century, the West Indies was viewed as being a part of a geographical whole that included continental North America and so, Walker would have been considered a suitable candidate to command.¹ The Quebec expedition did not require its naval commander to be an experienced combat leader, especially as the French fleet was effectively dormant and holed up in its ports.² Walker was required to be a good convoy commander, which he had proved to be. If his squadron came within sight of privateers, then the French probably would not have risked battle. Privateers sought an easy path to profit, involving the capture of straggling merchantmen. Walker was not required to fight a major sea battle, but protect the transports in his squadron and convoy them up the St Lawrence River via Boston.

¹ Waller, G. M., *Samuel Vetch, Colonial Enterpriser*, (Chapel Hill (North Carolina), 1960), p. 208; Morgan, William Thomas, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711', *Bulletin of the Departments of History and Political and Economic Science in Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario, Canada*, no. 56, (May 1928), p. 3.

² Owen, J. H., *War at sea under Queen Anne, 1702-1708*, (London, 1938), p. 50.

Walker's birth date is one of the many unknowns; sources even disagree on the year. However, it is generally agreed that Elizabeth Walker, née Chamberlen, gave birth to him in either 1656 or 1666. The later date is thought to be the more realistic given that he went to Trinity College, Dublin, in 1678.³ His first marriage entry, of 2 January 1692, stated that he lived in Westminster and was 'about' thirty, which only adds ambiguity to his birth date.⁴ However, a contributor to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1824 asserts he was born in 1656, although he also gave an incorrect date of death.⁵ The author was responding to an enquiry about Walker's family history in a previous issue⁶ and claims to have had in his possession one of Walker's private journals, 'which includes the whole of the year 1708', a source which now, unfortunately, appears to be lost. The contributor further detailed how Walker received his unusual name. His father, Colonel William Walker, married Mary Hovenden. Mary's father possessed large estates around Tankardstown which were inherited from his ancestor, Giles Hovenden, who came to Ireland during Henry VIII's reign, 'and thus was the surname Hovenden introduced to serve as a Christian name in the Walker family'. Hovenden Walker married twice during his lifetime but only produced one daughter, Margaret, from his second marriage, who died a spinster in 1777.⁷

Walker had spent a lifetime in the naval and colonial sphere. Presumably he joined the Royal Navy directly after leaving Trinity College, as there is a large gap in

³ Walker did not complete his degree, Laughton, J. K., and Davies, J. D. (rev.), 'Walker, Sir Hovenden (1666?–1725)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter cited as *ODNB*), (Oxford, 2004).

⁴ To Jane Pudsey of Holborn 'about' twenty-six at St Mary Magdalen, Old Fish Street, *Harleian Society*, XXXI (London, 1890), 'Marriage licenses issued by the Vicar-General of the Archbishop of Canterbury', p. 206.

⁵ *Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1824, 'Z', pp. 38-39.

⁶ *Ibid.*, December 1819, 'W.H.', pp. 509-510.

⁷ His second wife, Margaret Jefferson, survived him, Laughton and Davies, 'Walker, Sir Hovenden', *ODNB*.

his known biography until he appears on the island of Nevis in 1686. Here, he volunteered for service on the *Dartmouth*, a fourth-rate vessel under Captain George St Lo. The circumstances surrounding Walker's appearance on the island are uncertain, but show that he had over twenty-five years experience of transatlantic crossings by the time of the Quebec expedition in 1711. St Lo had been on station since 1682, when he was first given command of the *Dartmouth*, for use by the Governor of the Leeward Islands for anti-piracy operations and to preserve the Governor's control over the disparate group of islands that made up the colony.⁸

Found amongst the papers of Samuel Pepys is an account by Walker of the *Dartmouth's* mission to neutralise a particularly troublesome pirate who was causing great havoc in the vicinity of the Leeward Islands.⁹ The pirate was able to slip away and evade capture once his pillaging had ceased. They ultimately discovered the culprit at Puerto Rico where they were harassed by the Spanish officials who endorsed piratical activity. How Walker came to be at Nevis and why he volunteered for this particular service is unknown. Presumably he was already serving in the navy, as an unemployed officer, or 'volunteer', which was a position below midshipman and catered for gentlemen who wanted to serve at sea, but had little in the way of a role.¹⁰ The Governor of Tortola, in the Virgin Islands, and other colonial officials also volunteered. In any case, Walker was present on the *Dartmouth*, tasked with hunting down a pirate who had committed several outrages against English and Dutch shipping and territory.

⁸ The Leeward Islands consisted of Antigua, Montserrat and St Christopher, with Nevis as the centre of government, Merriman, R. D., 'Captain George St. Lo, R.N., 1658-1718', *The Mariner's Mirror*, vol. XXXI, no. 1, (1945), p. 15.

⁹ Bodleian Library, Oxford (hereafter cited as BLO), MS Rawlinson A189, fol. 337, Walker to a friend in London, July 1686.

¹⁰ Midshipmen were suitable candidates for promotion to lieutenant, Rodger, N. A. M., *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815*, (London, 2004), p. 119.

Walker's account, which the following narrative is derived from, describes their departure from Nevis in April 1686 and sailing around the Caribbean to garner intelligence on the pirate's location.¹¹ Acting upon the reports of various islanders, the *Dartmouth* sailed for Tortola where they found that many slaves and livestock had been stolen or killed, and that the Governor's wife had been 'abused' and his son beaten. The perpetrators reportedly consisted of 'all sorts of rogues' including Spaniards, Mulattoes, English, French, Dutch and Irish. St Lo proceeded west to the Spanish island of Puerto Rico where the *Dartmouth* searched fruitlessly in many bays along its coast, until arriving at the city of Puerto Rico (modern San Juan). The pilot that came aboard was plied with 'good liquor...which made him...much more frank in his conversation than otherwise he would have been' and consequently revealed that the pirate captain was based there.

Some sailors from the *Dartmouth*, including Walker, ostensibly landed to water and trade. However, St Lo had directed Lieutenant Ignatius Usher to 'enquire privately after the pirate'.¹² Governor Martinos had denied any knowledge of the pirate's activities and instead invited the rest of the crew to enter the city. This was refused by the landing party, suspicious of his intentions. They then noticed Spanish 'cavaliers' edging around them until finally surrounding the party. The English were consequently 'beaten' by Spanish lances and swords, as their assailants shouted "kill the heretic dogs!" Fortunately, none were killed but they were all imprisoned in the Governor's house. Martinos' excuse for this treatment was the landing of arms – normal practice for a landing party – which was thought to be for another 'design'.

¹¹ BLO, MS Rawlinson A189, fol. 337, Walker to a friend in London, July 1686.

¹² Fortescue, J. W., (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and the West Indies*, (2 vols. (1685-1692), London, 1899-1901), (hereafter cited as *CSPC*), 1685-1688, pp. 190-191, no. 678.v, Deposition of Captain George St Loe, 10 May 1686.

Meanwhile, the Governor insisted that the *Dartmouth* should not leave the harbour and pointed out that it was surrounded by five forts. Martinos demanded to see St Lo's orders and commission, but would not board the *Dartmouth*. The English threatened to answer 'with the black mouths' of their guns and Lieutenant Usher said he 'would rather die than lose the King's honour'. Nevertheless their orders were shown to Martinos to defuse the situation, which secured the release of the prisoners, including Walker who had previously offered to remain as a hostage. Martinos would not permit the *Dartmouth* to leave harbour and instead insisted that St Lo proceed further into the bay. Fearing this would result in his frigate being taken, St Lo refused. After spotting military preparations at the various forts and a force of canoes assembling on the other side of the harbour, the *Dartmouth* weighed anchor and made a rush for the harbour exit. Two crew members were killed and another two wounded when the frigate exchanged fire with a fort during its escape. The crew of the *Dartmouth* were later informed that the pirate captain was the nephew of Governor Martinos and son of Puerto Rico's captain-general.¹³ This was possibly Walker's first taste of action and he displayed a keen intellect by sketching a map detailing their situation at Puerto Rico, of where the enemy forts were, along with the emplacements for 300 cannon, and the position of a sandbank that may have prevented their escape.

This episode is indicative of the danger posed by naval operations, even during peacetime. However, this behaviour was not confined to the opponents of England. Captain St Lo had been critical of his superior, the Acting Governor of the Leeward Islands, as he had profited from the sanctioning of piracy – which St Lo was tasked to combat. There was great friction between naval commander and colonial governor –

¹³ BLO, MS Rawlinson, A189 fol. 337, Walker to a friend in London, July 1686.

a trend that would also haunt Walker's career.¹⁴ A naval song about these events was attributed, by Pepys, to the hand of Walker, clumsily entitled 'The treachery of the Spaniards of Porto Rico to the Dartmouth frigate and her company'.¹⁵ This was penned as the *Dartmouth* sailed on to Boston – 1711 was not the first time that Walker had visited Massachusetts.¹⁶ After this incident, little of Walker is known until he was promoted to post-captain.

Walker's seniority was dated 17 February 1692, when he was made captain of the *Vulture* fireship. It is curious to note that of the eight other officers achieving their seniority on that day, seven were in command of fireships.¹⁷ The nine newly promoted captains serve to illustrate the wide and varied characters that were selected to command naval vessels, when the professional Royal Navy was beginning to assert its position in Europe and the wider world.

Captain Nathaniel Brown appeared to be the most privileged, as he was immediately appointed to command the fifth-rate frigate *Falcon*. Unfortunately, after crossing the Atlantic, he died in the Caribbean in 1693.¹⁸ Captain Sir William Jumper quickly escaped fireship command and proceeded, after capturing many prizes, to make a long and successful career for himself.¹⁹ The perils of sea service were made apparent by Captain Thomas Killingworth who was present at the Battle of La Hogue, but was killed in 1694 when he was attacked by two privateers.²⁰ Captain John Knapp, commanding the fourth-rate *Africa*, received acclaim when he fought off three privateers. In 1703 he was dispatched to the West Indies under the then Commodore

¹⁴ MacDougall, Philip, 'St Lo, George (1658–1718)', *ODNB*; Merriman, 'Captain George St Lo', p. 16.

¹⁵ Firth, C. H., (ed.), 'Naval Songs and Ballads', *Navy Records Society*, vol. XXXIII, (1907), pp. 92-95.

¹⁶ Laughton and Davies, 'Walker, Sir Hovenden', *ODNB*.

¹⁷ The National Archives (hereafter cited as TNA), ADM 6/424, record of seniorities, 21 June 1673-4 February 1754.

¹⁸ Charnock, John, *Biographia Navalis*, (London, 1796), II, p. 409.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 418-425.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 425-426.

Hovenden Walker.²¹ Edward Littleton's brief career as a captain ended, after various convoy duties, with his death aboard the third-rate *Dorsetshire* in 1696.²²

John Perry was the only one of the nine captains not to progress from command of a fireship. First, the *Owner's Love*, until he was transferred, in the West Indies, to the *Cygnnet* in 1693, where he surrendered his ship without a fight, owing to the capture of a frigate he was sailing with by two French privateers. While he managed to avoid death from disease or action, unlike many of his contemporaries, the consequences of losing his ship were harsh. Not only was he stripped of his command and rank, but he was also dismissed from the navy, fined and imprisoned. He was also the only one of the original nine to outlive Walker, dying in 1733. A glance at his short and unimpressive command career reveals little about the man, however, he was one of the period's great marine engineers. Even before these events, he had built a dry dock and pump at Portsmouth. After his full pardon and early release from prison in 1697, where he wrote against naval impressment, he worked on a multitude of projects. He laboured in England's major ports and on the Thames before serving Peter the Great of Russia in the development of canal systems. His bravery cannot be doubted either, as in 1690, when a lieutenant serving aboard the *Montague*, Perry remained at his station for an hour after losing his arm without seeking medical attention, when in action against a French privateer.²³

Captain James Stewart's command on the *Flame* fireship so impressed Admiral Cloudesley Shovell that he was transferred within a couple of years to command the *Cambridge*, a third-rate vessel of eighty-guns – a ship deemed too large

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 426-427.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 427.

²³ Appleby, John H., 'Perry, John (1669/70–1733)', *ODNB*; Charnock, *Biographia Navalis*, II, pp. 430-431.

to sail up the St Lawrence river in 1711. Stewart had secured the patronage of Shovell and went on to command greater ships of ninety-guns.²⁴ Finally, Captain Robert Winn was present at the taking of Gibraltar and also served with distinction at the Battle of Malaga – the only fleet battle of the War of the Spanish Succession – along with Jumper (also at Gibraltar), Knapp and Stewart.²⁵

Captain Walker, on his first command in the *Vulture*, was present at the Battle of Barfleur, in the Red squadron.²⁶ After a year's service aboard the fireship, his command was transferred to the fifty-gun *Crown*, of the fourth-rate, for less than a month.²⁷ He then took command of the *Sapphire*, a fifth-rate frigate of twenty-eight-guns.²⁸ He was assigned to cruise on the Irish station, where he met some success in combating privateers. After two days in command of the *Coventry* fifty-gun fourth-rate, Walker was assigned the forty-eight-gunner *Foresight* of the same rate, and in April 1696, along with the thirty-two-gun *Sheerness*, he engaged two French ships of sixty- and seventy-guns respectively. In doing so he successfully defended more than thirty merchant ships destined for the West Indies.²⁹ In 1697, Walker received his first seventy-gun, third-rate, commands in the *Kent*; the *Content Prize*, serving under Admiral Sir George Rooke; and the *Royal Oak*.³⁰ In 1698, he transferred, in the distinguished role of flag-captain, to the eighty-gun *Boyne*, a role in which he served

²⁴ Charnock, *Biographia Navalis*, II, pp. 431-434.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 467-468.

²⁶ Winfield, Rif, *British Warships in the Age of Sail, 1603-1714*, (Barnsley, 2009), p. 184; Laughton and Davies, 'Walker, Sir Hovenden', *ODNB*, suggests he did not take active part.

²⁷ National Maritime Museum (hereafter cited as NMM), SER/136.

²⁸ This was not the same vessel present on the Quebec expedition. Laughton and Davies, 'Walker, Sir Hovenden', *ODNB*, refers to him transferring to an 'armed ship' the *Friends' Adventure*, although no ship is listed as being in the navy or hired, other than storeships, Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, p. 166.

²⁹ Walker defended a Channel convoy on 30 April 1695, although the *Sheerness* is dated at this action in 1694, the year it occurred is quite uncertain, Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, pp. 96, 175; NMM, SER/136.

³⁰ NMM, SER/136; Laughton and Davies, 'Walker, Sir Hovenden', *ODNB*; Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, pp. 65, 67, 75 (the *Royal Oak* carried seventy-four guns).

under Vice-Admiral Aylmer, visiting the Mediterranean to confirm the Treaty of Ryswick.³¹ Walker experienced a wide variety of commands during the Nine Years War, and he carried on his service into the peace, but not before sorting out his finances in the Court of Chancery in Ireland concerning a sum of £1,000.³²

Through a short analysis of Walker's contemporary captains, it can be seen that he progressed to become the most senior amongst them. As has been noted, Captain Knapp, a commander with a distinguished combat record, was placed under the command of Walker when he was detached from Rooke's main battle fleet in 1703. If, compared with many of his contemporaries, Walker had few recorded combat encounters, he nevertheless possessed a considerable amount of transatlantic convoy experience which the others lacked. It is this experience that allowed him to be promoted to flag rank and be given the responsibility for convoying the 1711 expedition into uncharted waters. Walker was also the only officer out of the original nine to continue in service without retiring from sea duties, or dying in their execution.

During the Nine Years War, it was evident that fireships were the initial training vessels for new commanders.³³ A quick glance at the seniority records shows that, during this period, the majority of new captains started out on these vessels, at a time when they were at their numerical peak in the naval inventory. It is uncertain as to when the majority of these captains were first promoted to lieutenant, although Jumper and Wynn were commissioned as lieutenants in March and December 1688

³¹ NMM, SER/136; Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, p. 68; Laughton and Davies, 'Walker, Sir Hovenden', *ODNB*.

³² Laughton and Davies, 'Walker, Sir Hovenden', *ODNB*.

³³ These vessels were regarded as both fifth-rates of twenty-eight guns and fireships, Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, pp. 182-184.

respectively, whilst Brown received his lieutenancy in August 1689.³⁴ It can be assumed, therefore, that a general trend of three or four years experience would be attained before receiving a recognised independent command. However, at the height of a naval war, promotion may have been a speedier phenomenon. Walker was made a second lieutenant on 30 October 1688 on the *Saint David*, a fourth-rate vessel.³⁵

This group of junior commanders must have been deemed acceptable by the new post-Revolution regime, at a time when the disaffected had the opportunity to rally to the Jacobite cause and its French allies. The Williamite regime required a navy with the ability to defend revolutionary Britain from the threat posed by the old monarchy. Ironically, Walker would later flee for being a suspected Jacobite upon the accession of George I; however, he would regain favour from the Crown towards the end of his life. Still, his service during the Nine Years War put him in good stead to command in the next.

Walker's responsibilities grew with the inevitable war which broke out as a result of the death of the Spanish King. He may not have been an adventurous character to rival the likes of Shovell, nor was he to achieve any further promotion that would warrant his command of a fleet like Rooke. He was, however, a competent officer with more experience than the average captain. The fact that Walker was not present at any of the major battles during the War of the Spanish Succession is not unusual considering they were so few in number. He was often given considerable responsibility, operating his own command throughout much of the war. This new war would greatly expand Walker's naval experience, where he would operate in all

³⁴ Syrett, David and DiNardo, R. L., (eds), 'The Commissioned Sea Officers of the Royal Navy, 1660-1815', *Navy Records Society*, Occasional publications vol. 1, (1994).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 454; 'Walker, Sir Hovenden', *ODNB*; The *Saint David* carried fifty-four guns, Winfield, Rif, *British Warships in the Age of Sail, 1603-1714*, (Barnsley, 2009), p. 111.

major naval theatres. He would become more than a naval captain as well, for he would often assume the role of commodore to command squadrons. Walker was entrusted with the protection of trade and convoys, defence of the monarchy in 1708, and placed in command of two amphibious expeditions in the Americas at a time when such operations were a rarity.

In 1701, as Europe again prepared for war, Walker was given command of the formidable seventy-gun ship of the third-rate, *Burford*.³⁶ He accompanied Rooke's fleet on the abortive Cadiz expedition in 1702, but was not present when the Admiral later took the famed treasure fleet at Vigo Bay on the journey back to England. This was because Rooke had appointed Walker as commodore of a squadron detached from his fleet, to sail for the West Indies. This command would illustrate how issues of authority and military-colonial relations could affect such expeditions. Complaints were made against Walker by various governors, both in 1703 and in 1712. However, this was indicative of the conflict of authority of many, if not the majority, of naval captains with colonial governors.³⁷ This was a phenomenon Walker had already seen when serving under St Lo.

Walker's detachment from the main fleet also reveals the difficulties posed by long sea journeys. Due to appalling weather conditions, the squadron was unable to water at Madeira. This made a diversion towards the Cape Verde Islands necessary, arriving on 24 October 1702, before progressing to St Vincent. The squadron included six vessels of the third-rate and two of the fourth, along with 2,500 troops.³⁸ By the time the squadron reached Barbados on 5 December, the *Burford* had suffered

³⁶ Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, p. 77.

³⁷ Bourne, Ruth, *Queen Anne's Navy in the West Indies*, (New Haven, 1939), chapter 7 *passim*.

³⁸ TNA, ADM 1/577, Walker to Burchett, 14 October 1725 lists six third-rates, three of seventy-guns and three of eighty-guns.

twenty men dead and 120 sick were sent ashore. Even Walker himself had succumbed to illness. Other vessels were listed as being sickly, but the *Burford* was singled out by Walker in January 1703 as ‘exceedingly weakened, not having above 140 seamen aboard, buried above 100 since she parted from Sir George Rooke and above 100 being sick ashore’.³⁹ The normal complement of the *Burford* on the wartime establishment was approximately 450, indicating just how undermanned it was.⁴⁰ The Commodore transferred to his old command, the *Boyne*, probably to evade the contagion.⁴¹ Such long voyages could be extremely detrimental to a ship’s crew, and by extension, the squadron’s effectiveness, whilst conditions in the West Indies also encouraged sickness amongst Europeans.

Walker recognised the importance of trade protection and sent the *Expedition* to escort six East India vessels from Barbados. However, his prime concern remained the state of his sailors, as sickness continued to spread amongst them:

The fever and other distempers have raged amongst both the men-of-war and transports to that degree that if they do not abate there will not be left seamen enough to sail the ships...Here are eight sail of men-of-war at the Leeward Islands, which if well manned are sufficient alone to encounter all the naval force the French have in the West Indies; but if the men continue to die so fast, and no supply be had, they will become only useless hulks.

³⁹ Headlam, Cecil, (ed.), *CSPC*, (6 vols. (1702-1712), London, 1913-1925), 1702-1703, p. 115, no. 164, Walker to [Nottingham?], 12 January 1703.

⁴⁰ Merriman, R. D., (ed.), ‘Queen Anne’s Navy: Documents Concerning the Administration of the Navy of Queen Anne, 1702-1714’, *Navy Records Society*, vol. 103, (1961), appendix VI, p. 365; Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, p. 61.

⁴¹ Burchett implies, understandably, that he remained in the *Burford*, as this was his command at Cadiz, Burchett, Josiah, *A Complete History of the Most Remarkable Transactions at Sea*, (London, 1720), p. 599; Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, p. 68.

The soldiers fared better on land and many sailors deserted in an attempt to follow their example. Walker was additionally alarmed by

a kind of cartel settle[d] between Barbados and Martinique, vessels pass to and fro with flags of truce as they call them, and the French come into the road and anchor amongst the English ships, and the persons belonging to those vessels pass up and down the Island unmolested, as if there were no war at all between the two Crowns.

This helps to explain why so often naval commanders did not enjoy cordial relations with their colonial government colleagues. The laws of Europe always seemed to be diluted in the colonies. Walker was worried that the French were gaining useful intelligence as a result of the locals profiting from their illegal trade. To combat this, he despatched Captain Knapp (his fellow officer gaining seniority the same day) to seize a French vessel, whilst a colonel was ordered to arrest any 'spies'. One Frenchman was consequently sentenced to be executed.⁴²

The slowness in communications at this point also hampered Walker's relations with the colonial governors. Governor-General of the Leeward Islands Colonel Christopher Codrington was ambitious and well-connected, and planned to extend England's dominion over the West Indies by attacking Martinique. The squadron's arrival at Barbados had not been communicated to Codrington as Walker had requested.⁴³ The Barbadian authorities privately argued between themselves over who should pay for a boat to convey this message. Codrington, meanwhile, oblivious

⁴² *CSPC*, 1702-1703, pp. 179-180, no. 298, [Walker to Nottingham?], 4 February 1703.

⁴³ Walker only had seventy-gun vessels at his disposal, which was thought to be improper to carry a message. *CSPC*, 1704-1705, p. 121, no. 300, Council of Trade and Plantations to Sir Bevil Granville, 4 May 1704.

to Walker's arrival, was irritated by having to wait for the squadron, whilst the Commodore was unaware that his message had yet to be delivered.⁴⁴

This breakdown in communications was examined in 1704 when Codrington's complaints were investigated.⁴⁵ In the investigation, the President and Council of Barbados acknowledged that they did not alert the Governor to Walker's presence.⁴⁶ When Walker finally headed towards the Leeward Islands, with orders to assist with Codrington's plans, the projected attack on Martinique was abandoned in favour of the weaker Guadeloupe due to the pitiful state of his sickly troops. The arrogant Codrington was dismayed at the effectiveness of the forces, as only 1,000 of the 2,500 soldiers that crossed the Atlantic had arrived in a fit condition. Walker also conveyed the 2,000 men of the regiments already based at Barbados to make up the numbers to 3,000 effectives in the attack on Guadeloupe.⁴⁷ Codrington explained the pitiful situation in late February 1703, just after Walker's arrival at Antigua:

abundance of the soldiers and seamen are dead and the rest so sickly they are scarce fit for service, many officers, and the best as I am told, are gone off, nor could better be expected from their long stay at Barbados, where the planters think the best way to make their strangers welcome is to [murder] them with drinking; the tenth part of that strong liquor which will scarce warm the blood of our West Indians, who have bodies like Egyptian mummies, must certainly dispatch a new-comer to the other world... the most I can now pretend to is to attack

⁴⁴ Bourne, *Queen Anne's Navy in the West Indies*, p. 196.

⁴⁵ Maxwell Lyte, H. C., (ed.), *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations*, 1704-1709, I, (London, 1920), pp. 1-2, 5 April 1704, Povey to Board of Trade, [Journal book I].

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11, 4 May 1704, Board of Trade to Sir Bevil Granville, [Journal book I.29-32]; CSPC, 1704-1705, p. 253, no. 568, Sir Bevil Granville to Council of Trade and Plantations, 18 September 1704.

⁴⁷ Bourne, *Queen Anne's Navy in the West Indies*, p. 197.

Guadeloupe, and our great ships are so foul and unfit for service without any light frigates to attend them, that even this attempt will go on very awkwardly and heavily.⁴⁸

Walker had further orders to combine his squadron with Admiral Benbow's (later Admiral Graydon's, due to the former's death) and attack Placentia in Newfoundland once his West Indian service was completed – a prospect that was becoming increasingly unlikely. The land forces were insufficiently prepared, as they lacked the essential tools needed for conducting a siege, whilst Walker was hindered by a lack of pilots, making the landings at Guadeloupe a difficult, but successful, operation.⁴⁹ The land forces besieging the fort at Basse Terre were strong enough to see the defenders flee into the hills after three weeks. However, as the summer drew near, with supplies running low and sickness spreading at sea and on land, and now including an indisposed Codrington, it was decided that they should withdraw, this taking place on 7 May.⁵⁰ Codrington and Walker descended into the usual bickering, apportioning blame to each other, when it was really the fault of neither.

The failure occurred due to three factors. Firstly, there was too much wastage through disease which seriously depleted the fighting strength of the land force. This was only exacerbated by the rising heat of the late (for the West Indies) season. Secondly, and to a lesser degree, there was a lack of suitable siege equipment as a proper attack of the fort at Basse Terre could have saved valuable time. Along with the fact that the West Indian regiments had little ammunition and relied on Walker's

⁴⁸ *CSPC*, 1702-1703, pp. 213-214, no. 362, Codrington to [Nottingham?], 24 February 1703.

⁴⁹ Bourne, *Queen Anne's Navy in the West Indies*, p. 197; Burchett, *A Complete History of the Most Remarkable Transactions at Sea*, p. 603.

⁵⁰ *CSPC*, 1702-1703, pp. 439-451, no. 737, Walker's journal, 5 March-25 May 1703; Harding, Richard, 'Sailors and Gentlemen of Parade: Some Professional and Technical Problems Concerning the Conduct of Combined Operations in the Eighteenth Century', *The Historical Journal*, vol. XXXII, no. 1, (March, 1989), p. 50.

forces to provide much of this, the lack of equipment, and the consequent borrowing and hurried redistribution of the necessary tools, suggests a ridiculously unprepared situation. Ultimately, poor communications were responsible for the withdrawal of what could have been a successful operation. The period during the winter, whilst the squadron procrastinated in the sheltered waters of Barbados and when Codrington was unaware of Walker's proximity, significantly delayed the attack. Consequently lives were claimed by sickness as time progressed and the consumption of a large proportion of supplies beforehand reduced the effectiveness of the fleet.

Nevertheless, Walker had properly landed the regiments under difficult circumstances and Codrington had acted bravely. If any party were to receive blame, it was the mismanagement of the Barbadian council in ensuring that Richard Downes, 'he being a man of a very ill life [according to Governor Sir Bevil Granville of Barbados],⁵¹ and I do believe will appear to have chiefly been the occasion of the not sending an advice-boat to General Codrington when Walker's fleet was here. He was at that time treasurer, and would not lay out the money'.⁵²

It is clear, however, that Codrington blamed Walker for the failure.⁵³ Issues of command had arisen, with debates over what extent the powers of Codrington as general of the land forces, and those of Walker as naval commander, actually were. Walker complained when land-only council of wars demanded naval services. He suggested that general council of wars would be preferable in reaching such

⁵¹ Brother to George, the future secretary at war during the Quebec expedition, Zacek, Natalie, 'Granville, Sir Bevil (1665–1706)', *ODNB*.

⁵² *CSPC*, 1704-1705, p. 235, no. 515, Sir Bevil Granville to Council of Trade and Plantations, 22 August 1704.

⁵³ *CSPC*, 1702-1703, pp. 612-613, no. 1011, Antigua Governor Codrington to the Council of Trade and Plantations, 8 August 1703.

conclusions.⁵⁴ Codrington's criticism was unjust as he overly relied on Walker's naval stores, artillery and provisions, when the Commodore had orders to proceed north and also had to consider the security of his squadron.⁵⁵ A committee of the Privy Council investigated Codrington's complaints about Walker's conduct. No fault was found with his command and Walker was quickly exonerated.⁵⁶ This type of operation would not be seen again in the West Indies during the war, as the persistent lack of success in the Caribbean failed to enthuse a ministry becoming increasingly obsessive over its European campaigns. It was not only because of the failure at Guadeloupe. Benbow, Whetstone, and Graydon all failed to make an impact in the Caribbean. After 1703 only frigates would be sent to the area, which smacks of defensive posturing rather than showing any real desire to fight an aggressive blue-water campaign.⁵⁷

Walker again transferred his command, this time to the eighty-gun third-rate *Cumberland*, before heading north where he proceeded to amalgamate his squadron with Vice-Admiral Graydon's.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, success would not be found in Newfoundland either. The task of operating in the West Indies and then proceeding to Newfoundland was almost identical to Admiral Wheler's 1693 venture. Walker applied his signature to the council of war's decision to abandon an attack on Placentia in September 1703. The reasons for returning to England were numerous. Their ships were in an appalling state and their crews too weak and sickly, as provisions were very low and rotten. 2,000 soldiers were said to have been required,

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 439-451, no. 737, Walker's journal, 5 March-25 May 1703.

⁵⁵ Atkinson, C. T., 'Queen Anne's War in the West Indies Part II: The Windward Sphere', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, vol. XXIV, (1946), p. 190.

⁵⁶ McLay, Keith Andrew John, 'Combined Operations: British Naval and Military Co-operation in the Wars of 1688-1713' (University of Glasgow PhD thesis, 2003), pp. 329-330.

⁵⁷ Bourne, *Queen Anne's Navy in the West Indies*, p. 58.

⁵⁸ NMM, SER/136.

but the land forces had been reduced to only 1,305 (with the 500 New Englanders expected numbering only fifty). Furthermore, intelligence suggested that the enemy were not inferior in number, whilst the stores for a siege were insufficient. The impracticality of launching such an attack during that season of the year was also stated, as the weather was poor and the winter fast approaching.⁵⁹ A return to a proper port in England was clearly the sensible option. The supply situation was certainly critical. With many of his men sick, Walker did not have enough to man the furnaces on board the *Cumberland* resulting in a lack of boiling water. They had also consumed the entire stock of butter, cheese, peas and oatmeal. Furthermore, with only bad water to drink, many men died and the squadron was battered by a storm causing its ships to disperse and find the nearest landfall.⁶⁰ Walker may have had harrowing memories of this ordeal when he returned in 1711.

Despite this lack of success, Walker had demonstrated that he was an able commander by convoying his squadron across the Atlantic – directly after a difficult operation at Cadiz, whilst his manpower slowly diminished. He then coordinated the distribution of arms and supplies amongst the land forces at Guadeloupe, which he landed in enemy territory without the aid of pilots. Additionally, Walker was issued orders that limited his time in the West Indies, as he was ordered to depart for Newfoundland in May when he was still in the Caribbean. Walker was hampered by issues of command, delays beyond his control, an undermanned squadron and a lack of supplies, whilst his ships were in a poor state. He was constrained by orders that, owing to slow communications, did not fully appreciate the situation in the West Indies and assumed he could operate effectively against Placentia. Even so he

⁵⁹ *CSPC*, 1702-1703, pp. 667-668, no. 1071, council of war minutes held aboard the *Boyne* at Newfoundland, 3 September 1703; Bourne, *Queen Anne's Navy in the West Indies*, p. 91, n. 60.

⁶⁰ Bourne, *Queen Anne's Navy in the West Indies*, p. 81.

managed to sail to besiege Cadiz, take a squadron to the West Indies, attack Guadeloupe, sail for Newfoundland, and then return to England, over a period of almost fifteen months. Much of this time was spent in independent command, in severely undermanned, poor-quality ships – which had not been properly equipped for such a long voyage – but none of which were lost.⁶¹

On his return to England, Walker remained in command of the *Cumberland*, where it survived the great hurricane of 1703 intact whilst in the Bristol Channel.⁶² This ship was Walker's longest command, which he apparently laid up in May 1704, only to take it on again that December.⁶³ This vessel was an important eighty-gunner – the first third-rate, three-deck ship to be built for the Royal Navy. Walker's first operation, during his second period in command of the *Cumberland*, was to patrol the English Channel and Bay of Biscay in 1705.⁶⁴

Barcelona had been taken by the allies the same year, but was soon besieged by a Franco-Spanish army. Without the Anglo-Dutch fleet, which had departed the Mediterranean for the winter, the garrison was at considerable risk, especially due to their close proximity to the French naval base at Toulon. Vice-Admiral Sir John Leake had been left with a small number of vessels at Lisbon so that he could return earlier during the next campaigning season to relieve Barcelona. However, with the French fleet present under the Comte de Toulouse, Leake would have to wait for reinforcements under Vice-Admiral George Byng.⁶⁵ Walker convoyed a small squadron of reinforcements to Leake, including some troop transports, to take part in

⁶¹ Charnock, *Biographia Navalis*, II, p. 456.

⁶² Brayne, Martin, *The Greatest Storm*, (Stroud, 2003), p. 85.

⁶³ NMM, SER/136.

⁶⁴ Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, p. 70; Laughton and Davies, 'Walker, Sir Hovenden', *ODNB*.

⁶⁵ Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*, p. 156.

the relief of Barcelona.⁶⁶ The mere presence of Leake's larger fleet, accompanied with fresh reinforcements of soldiers, ensured that the opposing French fleet, lacking confidence, returned to Toulon. Without naval support, the besiegers also retreated. A strategic maritime victory for the French at this point would have ensured the loss of the army in Catalonia and Valencia, and a naval withdrawal from the Mediterranean.⁶⁷ Walker had, therefore, contributed to a success which ensured British strategic dominance over the Mediterranean for the duration of the war. Walker's role may not have been a glamorous one, but it is precisely this sort of expertise that was required to win the war. The safe conveyance of transports over such a distance enabled the English to control the Mediterranean without even firing a broadside. After the relief, Walker again sailed to the West Indies, under Rear-Admiral Sir John Jennings, in October 1706. On the way, the squadron unsuccessfully attacked Santa Cruz in Tenerife in a manner similar to Nelson's failure in 1797. After bolstering the defences of the English possessions in the Caribbean, the squadron returned to England in April 1707.⁶⁸

Upon his return, Walker sat on the court-martial of Captain Sir Thomas Hardy.⁶⁹ Although he was eventually acquitted, Hardy's case is indicative of the difficulties facing an eighteenth-century naval officer when confronted with the wrath of the poorly informed, yet assertive, public. He was in command of a small squadron tasked with convoying the Lisbon trade when French ships were sighted. Hardy

⁶⁶ Laughton and Davies, 'Walker, Sir Hovenden', *ODNB*; Charnock, *Biographia Navalis*, II, p. 458; Anon., *The Life and History of Lewis XIV. Present King of France and Navarre*, (London, 1709), p. 571.

⁶⁷ Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*, p. 157.

⁶⁸ Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, p. 70; Laughton, J. K., and Hattendorf, John B. (rev.), 'Jennings, Sir John (1664–1743)', *ODNB*.

⁶⁹ According to Walker's journal, Hardy had originally been slated to command the 1711 Quebec expedition, Walker, Hovenden, 'A Journal: Or Full Account of the Late Expedition to Canada', introduction, p. 59, in Graham, Gerald S. (ed.), 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec, 1711', *Navy Records Society*, vol. XCIV, (1953) (hereafter cited as Walker, 'Journal').

decided not to pursue, but instead elected to protect the merchant ships, for which he was taken to court-martial. This came at the height of the furore over the French privateers' success in taking merchant vessels and so he was also cross-examined in the House of Lords. Both cases received widespread scrutiny and, fortunately, common sense prevailed with his acquittal.⁷⁰

Sitting upon a court-martial strengthened Walker's authority within the navy. Unfortunately, many details of Walker's career after the Hardy case are sketchy. He gave up command of his trusty *Cumberland* in September 1707, never to see it again. The next month it was captured by the French while defending the Lisbon convoy off Lizard Point.⁷¹ Walker then served briefly in the sixty-gun, fourth-rate, *Exeter*.⁷² Sources then differ for late 1707 and early 1708, as Leake apparently appointed Walker commander in chief of all ships in Portsmouth harbour⁷³ whilst he assumed command of the third-rate, eighty-gunner, *Royal Oak*, in December 1707, and then the second-rate of ninety-six guns, *Ramillies*, in January 1708.⁷⁴ He may have had temporary command of these ships, but it is certain that he was preparing to sail in the *Exeter* from Plymouth in February as commodore of the Channel cruisers.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean*, p. 177; Charnock, *Biographia Navalis*, II, p. 459; Laughton, J. K., and Davies, J. D. (rev.), 'Hardy, Sir Thomas (1666–1732)', *ODNB*.

⁷¹ Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*, Chapter VII *passim*. The *Cumberland* certainly had a colourful career. It was later sold to the Genoese and then to Spain, where it served, as the *Principe de Asturias*, as a flagship in the Spanish fleet at the Battle of Cape Passaro (1718). During the battle it was captured by the British but sold to Austria, Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, p. 70.

⁷² NMM, SER/136. Unfortunately, this is as far as this valuable source, from Charles Sergison, clerk of the acts at the Admiralty Board, goes in detailing Walker's commands.

⁷³ Charnock, *Biographia Navalis*, II, p. 459.

⁷⁴ Laughton and Davies, 'Walker, Sir Hovenden', *ODNB*; the *Ramillies* was in 'ordinary' (paid off) at Portsmouth, having originally been the *Royal Katherine*. It was due to be rebuilt, but it would never sail again, Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, pp. 36–37.

⁷⁵ Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*, p. 242. Sergison's papers, NMM, SER/136, indicate Walker's command of the *Exeter* ended in 1707 – the last year in this record, yet Walker must have taken up further command in that ship by February as some letters to Burchett are written addressed from the *Exeter*, 22 and 25 February 1708, British Library (hereafter cited as BL), Add MSS 61582, ff. 140, 170.

The dramatic events of 1708, when the first Jacobite plot to reach fruition occurred, required the immediate services of Captain Walker in defence of the realm.⁷⁶ The invasion crisis caused by the attempt of the Pretender, 'James III', to land in Britain created considerable unease amongst the British establishment. The Royal Navy descended into a frantic search for any enemy shipping to emerge from Dunkirk. The French attempted to install the Pretender on the throne by landing him around the Firth of Forth during March 1708. The squadron that accompanied the Pretender consisted of six ships-of-the-line, including the fifty-four-gun *Le Mars*, which carried James, five small frigates, a few privateers and a complement of twelve under-strength battalions of infantry – a total of approximately 5,000 men. To transport such a quantity of troops, many of the vessels were manned with reduced crews and carried fewer cannon than was standard.⁷⁷ Chef d'Escadre Claude de Forbin was the squadron's naval commander, which he readied at Dunkirk – a port notoriously difficult to blockade effectively.⁷⁸ His squadron slipped away on the night of 9 March.

Admiral Byng, responsible for the naval defence of Britain, pursued the Pretender to Scotland. Byng's mere presence there caused great apprehension amongst the French, who decided to return to Dunkirk. Forbin managed this with the loss of only one ship, the *Salisbury*, a British prize captured in 1703 which, in one of

⁷⁶ Unusually, these events are not recounted in Laughton and Davies, 'Walker, Sir Hovenden', *ODNB*. Charnock also omits this part of Walker's career, as he assumes that he went ahead with his original command appointment of convoying the 'Virginia and Canary' trade, but does state that he was delayed due to an emergency, *Biographia Navalis*, II, p. 459. It must be noted that J. K. Laughton stated that Charnock does make errors. Nevertheless Laughton also gives the wrong date of Walker's death showing how sketchy Walker's sources can be.

⁷⁷ Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*, p. 250.

⁷⁸ Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean*, p. 173.

those amazing turns of fate that occurs during wartime, was itself recaptured by its namesake and replacement, the new British *Salisbury*.⁷⁹

Consternation had descended upon the British political establishment due to the invasion scare caused by the Pretender's presence at Dunkirk. Upon discovery of the scheme, all available ships at Portsmouth, on the Thames, and the Medway, had been ordered to the Downs (off Kent). This involved over thirty vessels.⁸⁰ The agitated ministry dispatched the Duke of Marlborough to the continent, where he deployed ten battalions from Ostend across the Channel, to counter invasion.⁸¹

Walker was at Plymouth, as Commodore of the Soundings squadron and was preparing to convoy the trade to Lisbon, which consisted of around 100 vessels.⁸² This emphasises Walker's role as an important naval commander. He had not yet attained flag rank, but nevertheless possessed greater responsibility than many of his contemporaries in the role he was entrusted with. It lacked the glamour of sailing with the main battle fleet, but was a duty which was often as dangerous, due to the prevalence of privateers stalking the British trade routes. It is notable that little is recorded of Walker when performing these duties and this would seem to imply that he was successful in their execution.

Leake, as admiral of the fleet, was preparing to sail for the Mediterranean. Clearly the Pretender's threatened incursion into British territory was not enough of a threat to hold back the main fleet from this important naval arena. In view of this, the Queen authorised Walker to abandon his convoy duties, which were transferred to Leake who would be sailing past Lisbon anyway, and instead join the effort to

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

⁸⁰ Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*, p. 241.

⁸¹ Tunstall, W. C. B, (ed.), 'The Byng Papers', II, *Navy Records Society*, vol. LXVII, (1930), pp. 5-8.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 5-8; Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*, pp. 242-243.

intercept the Pretender.⁸³ According to letters to Burchett, Walker commanded his squadron of nine warships in the *Exeter*.⁸⁴ Inclement weather, unsurprisingly for the time of year, delayed Walker, Leake and Byng from sailing on time.⁸⁵

The Byng papers contain a great deal of the correspondence between the chief protagonists relating to this episode: Admiralty Secretary Burchett, Secretary of State Sunderland, Lord High Admiral Prince George, and patently Byng himself as the admiral responsible for intercepting the Pretender.⁸⁶ Discussion about allocating Walker's convoy duties to Leake was followed by an order from the Lord High Admiral to Walker, on 18 February, to immediately sail for St Helens with any of his ships that were ready, whilst the rest were to follow.⁸⁷ Walker did not receive this order until 21 February, but because of the weather conditions it took him some time to clear Plymouth.⁸⁸ Walker's importance is summed up by the amount of correspondence sent between Prince George, Byng and Burchett, about his role in the operation to deter the Pretender. Byng was then ordered to wait for Walker at the Downs. Once joined, a council of war was to be called, where it would be decided upon the intelligence attained whether to proceed as one squadron or split into two. If the latter, one squadron would patrol the Downs and the other the area between Rye and Calais.⁸⁹ Further letters debated whether they should join Rear-Admiral Jennings

⁸³ Tunstall, *The Byng Papers*, II, pp. 41-42, Sunderland to Burchett, 18 February 1708; Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*, p. 242.

⁸⁴ Also the *Salisbury* (50); *Mary* (60); *Canterbury* (60); *Monck* (60); *Antelope* (50); *Tartar* (32); *August* (60); and *Rye* (32) were to go with him, amongst others, BL, Add MSS 61582, ff. 140, 170, Walker to Burchett, 22 and 25 February 1708. (See Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail* for guns).

⁸⁵ BL, Add MSS 61582, ff. 140, Walker to Burchett, 22 February 1708; Tunstall, *The Byng Papers*, II, pp. 5-8; Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*, p. 242.

⁸⁶ Tunstall, *The Byng Papers*, II; Sainty, J. C., *Office-Holders in Modern Britain: Volume 4: Admiralty Officials 1660-1870* (London, 1975).

⁸⁷ Tunstall, *The Byng Papers*, II, pp. 41-42, Prince George to Walker, 18 February 1708.

⁸⁸ BL, Add MSS 61582, ff. 140, 170, Walker to Burchett, 22 and 24 February 1708; Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*, p. 242.

⁸⁹ Tunstall, *The Byng Papers*, II, pp. 45-46, Prince George enclosed, Burchett to Byng, 22 February 1708.

and, were the French to sail for Portsmouth, if Walker should instead join Vice-Admiral Dursley.⁹⁰

Walker finally arrived at the Downs on 5 March, indicating the difficulty of positioning squadrons in this period.⁹¹ When no word had been heard from Walker by 26 February, it emerged that he had been attempting to put to sea, but was forced back on the 24th and again around the 27th when he was held back by contrary winds.⁹² Returning to Plymouth after losing this battle against the elements, Walker eventually set sail on a westerly and was ‘probably past St Helens’ on 1 March, although it later emerged that Walker was still at St Helens on the 3rd.⁹³ With the eventual arrival of Walker’s squadron on 5 March, a council of war was called. Byng deemed his squadron, which now consisted of twenty-six ships-of-the-line as well as some smaller frigates, strong enough to be split in two as suggested by his orders.⁹⁴ Walker was last to arrive, although he did have the furthest to travel. Dursley and Byng had set out from Portsmouth and reached the Downs a week earlier, on 26 February. The weather had hampered all of their sailing efforts; however, the four admirals on station (Byng, Dursley, Jennings and Baker) had managed to make a quick reconnaissance of Dunkirk before Walker’s arrival. The council of war decided that the entire squadron should sail for Graveline Pits, then cruise off Dunkirk, before detaching a small squadron to patrol between Beachy Head and Dieppe as there were worries of French reinforcements from Brest.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-51. Dursley served on the *Boyne* under Walker when he was first commissioned as third lieutenant, Hattendorf, John B., ‘Berkeley, James, third earl of Berkeley (1680–1736)’, *ODNB*.

⁹¹ Walker had between eight and twelve ships in his squadron. Tunstall, *The Byng Papers*, II, p. 68, Byng to Burchett, 5 March 1708; Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*, p. 242.

⁹² Tunstall, *The Byng Papers*, II, pp. 52, 56, 58, Burchett to Byng, 26, 27, 28 February 1708.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 64, Burchett and Prince George to Byng, 1 and 3 March 1708.

⁹⁴ Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*, p. 248.

⁹⁵ Tunstall, *The Byng Papers*, II, p. 68, Council of War aboard the *Medway*, Burchett to Byng, 5 March 1708.

After Forbin's squadron slipped through the net and Byng's force gave chase to Scotland and back, Walker received orders from Prince George to sail for Deal and take command of a squadron organised by Captain Griffith, which was tasked with intercepting the Pretender on his return to Dunkirk. To carry out these orders, Walker was allowed to hoist a 'distinguishing pennant' on board any ship he deemed 'most convenient'.⁹⁶ He hoisted his pennant on the seventy-gun, third-rate, *Ipswich* on 23 March. It is clear that Walker's status was significant as he remained a commodore and was entrusted with an important mission. Part of Griffith's squadron under Captain Culliford was still at the Downs, despite orders to sail, because he was provided with inadequate pilots who clearly did not possess knowledge of Dunkirk. Culliford had described the pilot assigned to his ship as a 'sot' and had him discharged. Walker initially took command of this smaller squadron, but he also found the pilots to be unreliable. These ships remained at the Downs as the Pretender returned to Dunkirk.⁹⁷

Captain Griffith, who was left to cover Dunkirk once the main force had proceeded north, faced the French squadron on 25 March. The enemy had been sighted but their smaller frigates were faster and escaped. For fear of being outnumbered, Griffith did not risk making a reconnaissance of Dunkirk and instead sailed for the Downs to rendezvous with Walker, who then proceeded to Dunkirk with this stronger force.⁹⁸ Meanwhile, Rear-Admiral John Baker⁹⁹ was sent to return

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 106, Burchett to Byng, 20 March 1708.

⁹⁷ Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*, p. 261.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 261-262.

⁹⁹ John Baker was rear-admiral of the white – Walker's later rank when promoted for service on the Quebec expedition. Baker also had a Quebec connection. He was picked to lead the cancelled 1709 expedition to Quebec, which was instead diverted to Portugal; Davies, J. D., 'Baker, John (1660–1716)', *ODNB*.

Marlborough's embarked troops to Ostend and then take command of the ships around Dunkirk.¹⁰⁰

Walker's conduct here was criticised for being slow in taking station off Dunkirk due to the problems with pilots.¹⁰¹ However, his opinions on the matter were backed by Culliford. If his squadron had sailed, then perhaps they might have caught the Pretender, but it must not be forgotten that most of the British home fleet was chasing Forbin's squadron and failed. The French frigates were speedy and Walker may not even have joined Griffiths in time. Due to Walker and Culliford's inactivity, and the apparent uselessness of the other squadrons, rumours were spread that the Queen had secretly ordered the navy not to intercept the Pretender – her half-brother – now that the threat had dissipated with his return.¹⁰² Walker commanded the vessels cruising off Dunkirk in case of another break-out, until Baker returned.¹⁰³ Walker had great responsibility here as he possessed a higher authority over other captains, as he was regularly used in the role of squadron commodore. In this case he took command from another captain already stationed in the area, until he could hand over to an officer of flag rank.

Walker is reported to have been appointed captain-resident at Plymouth to supervise improvements there. Such a post assumed the role of commander in chief when an officer of flag rank was not in attendance.¹⁰⁴ In 1709 Walker's assistance was needed in supplying a witness for a court-martial. It was an interesting case,

¹⁰⁰ Tunstall, *The Byng Papers*, II, pp. 115, 120, Burchett and Prince George to Baker, 24 and 27 March 1708.

¹⁰¹ Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Manuscripts of His Grace the Duke of Portland*, IV, p. 482, W. Thomas to Edward Harley, 27 March 1708. This letter also mentions Leake's safe arrival at Lisbon – Walker's previous task.

¹⁰² Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*, p. 261.

¹⁰³ Tunstall, *The Byng Papers*, II, pp. 122, 138, Burchett and Baker to Byng, 30 March and 24 April 1708.

¹⁰⁴ Laughton and Davies, 'Walker, Sir Hovenden', *ODNB*.

having arisen out of the newly formed union of England with Scotland. A sixth-rate, twenty-four-gun, frigate which had previously formed part of the old Scots Navy, the *Dumbarton Castle*, had been captured by an enemy privateer of forty-two-guns whilst on convoy duty in April 1708.¹⁰⁵ The ship was taken to St Malo and its captain, Matthew Campbell, either escaped or was exchanged from his captivity at Dinan. Rear-Admiral Baker set up the process to try the loss of the ship in June 1709 when Captain Campbell was in England. In June, Campbell wrote to the Admiralty Secretary urging him to find his former sailors, who were present at the capture of the *Dumbarton Castle*, to be brought forward as witnesses. He asked for Quartermaster Joseph Ridge in particular. A letter was dispatched to Plymouth detailing the following: ‘Captain Walker to order the Captain of the *Diamond* to send up Joseph Ridge and any two men that can best give an account of the loss of the *Dumbarton*, and to do it immediately’. Campbell was duly acquitted in July 1709.¹⁰⁶

Walker’s authority in this situation may have been used in the capacity of captain-resident as he was certainly then at Plymouth. Unfortunately details of Walker’s career around this time are very much uncertain. Some sources have stated that Walker became a flag officer in 1709 as rear-admiral of the blue.¹⁰⁷ Although such a promotion seems feasible, this does not appear to be correct given that his commission to rear-admiral of the white in 1711 was addressed to ‘Captain’ Walker.¹⁰⁸ Detailed records of Walker next appear in 1711 when he led the Quebec expedition. It could be assumed that Walker was captain-resident at Plymouth until

¹⁰⁵ Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, p. 205; Merriman, ‘Queen Anne’s Navy’, p. 362, n. 3.

¹⁰⁶ Grant, James, (ed.), ‘The Old Scots Navy, 1689-1710’, *Navy Records Society*, vol. XLIV, (1912), pp. 357, 385-386.

¹⁰⁷ Syrett, and DiNardo, *The Commissioned sea officers of the Royal Navy*, p. 454; Charnock also mentions it, but seems unsure as to its validity as apparently Walker did not hold any command (he did not report the Plymouth posting), *Biographia Navalis*, II, p. 459.

¹⁰⁸ TNA, ADM 1/4094/409, St John to Burchett, 16 March 1711; TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty, 16 March 1711 (second letter).

this later appointment, as he received an order to dispatch cruisers to the Channel Soundings and Ireland in March 1710.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, the Admiralty was first made aware on 16 March 1711 that Walker would fill the rear-admiral of the white vacancy. Thomas Hardy¹¹⁰ was promoted rear-admiral of the blue at the same time. Along with Walker's, it was to be considered 'one promotion'.¹¹¹ However, from May 1712 to May 1713 Walker was receiving pay as both rear-admiral of the white and the blue, which only adds to the earlier confusion over his rank.¹¹² Walker's 'commission for commanding the squadron appointed upon a secret expedition' was dated 3 April 1711 and he was awarded a knighthood on the 14th.¹¹³ Walker's further career shall be followed later, but first the composition of the Quebec expedition must be examined in detail and its land officers analysed.

II: John Hill

John ('Jack') Hill was not a particularly noted military commander. He owed his position, like so many of his contemporaries, including Marlborough, to patronage before ability. Hill's year of birth is unknown, but, ironically through the influence of his cousin, the Duchess of Marlborough, he was sent to school in 1690 and was a page

¹⁰⁹ The orders did not specify his role or rank, they merely referred to 'Hovenden Walker Esquire' which suggests the position of captain-resident may have been a civilian appointment – in an era when roles and titles were indistinct. Nevertheless, he possessed the authority to dispatch naval vessels at Plymouth, TNA, ADM 2/43, Admiralty to Walker, 27 March 1710.

¹¹⁰ Apparently the original choice to lead the expedition, Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 16 and Walker, 'Journal', introduction, p. 59.

¹¹¹ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty, 16 March 1711 (first letter).

¹¹² Shaw, William, A. and Slingsby, F. H., (eds.) *Calendar of Treasury Books*, (London, 1955), XXVIII, 1714, p. clxxvii, Declared Accounts: Navy and Victualling.

¹¹³ Walker, 'Journal', p. 159, Walker's commission; *Post Man and the Historical Account*, 12 April 1711, Issue 1997.

to Prince George in 1692, before becoming a groom of the bedchamber in 1698 to the Duke of Gloucester – Princess Anne's only surviving son.¹¹⁴

Although Hill was not present at any of the great battles fought by Marlborough, his service was not without interest. Hill was commissioned into the Coldstream Guards as a captain in 1702. It is not certain if he had any previous military service.¹¹⁵ In 1703, Hill was a colonel and was appointed adjutant-general of the army sent to Portugal, before taking on the colonelcy of a regiment (previously Stanhope's) in 1705.¹¹⁶ When Hill took command of this regiment back in England, many of its soldiers had just been exchanged after being captured at Portalegre. He was commended for it being rapidly brought up to strength and trained. This allowed the regiment to be selected to take part in a descent on the French coast in 1706, but bad weather so delayed the expedition that it was called off and sent to Portugal instead. After a short time at Lisbon, it was transferred to Alicante by Admiral Shovell, where it served with the Earl of Galway's army and took part in several skirmishes. Hill was one of the few regimental commanders actually present with his regiment in Spain.¹¹⁷

In April 1707, the regiment met the enemy in combat when they formed up at Almansa after a long, hot march, opposite the more numerous Franco-Spanish. Hill distinguished himself here, commanding a brigade of four regiments at the rear of the left-wing. Commanding this reserve, Hill noted that the front line, which had up to this point performed well, was beginning to collapse. He demonstrated courage and

¹¹⁴ Spain, Jonathan, 'Hill, John (d. 1735)', *ODNB*.

¹¹⁵ A number of 'John Hill's' appear in various regiments.

¹¹⁶ Dalton, Charles, (ed.), *English Army Lists and Commission Registers, 1661-1714*, 6 vols., (London, 1894-1904), V, part I, pp. 46, 157, 163 n. 97; Spain, 'Hill, John', *ODNB*, probably erroneously stated that he was originally commissioned into the Grenadier Guards - which was then the 1st Foot Guards. There were Horse Grenadier Guards at the time, but Hill's name is not listed under these in Dalton.

¹¹⁷ Cannon, *Historical Record of the Eleventh or North Devonshire Regiment of Foot*, p. 20; Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, V, p. xxxiii; Spain, 'Hill, John', *ODNB*.

leadership when he rushed two regiments forward to cover the retreat of the now crumbling allied army and momentarily checked the advance of the enemy.¹¹⁸ Hill's brigade enabled much of the rest of the army to retreat in good order, although he suffered heavy casualties. Himself now retreating, Hill managed to link up with some Portuguese and Dutch units, but was consequently surrounded by the enemy and duly surrendered.¹¹⁹ When exchanged the following year, his regiment was again brought into a state of readiness very quickly and was sent to garrison Antwerp in the autumn.¹²⁰

Hill's relieved a regiment that suffered losses at Malplaquet and consequently took part in the siege at Mons in 1709. Again, the regiment served with distinction as it fought off a brutal sortie by the enemy garrison after they opened the trenches there – an honour accorded to Hill's as it was the most senior regiment present. However, Hill lost sixty killed and wounded and some, consumed with bloodlust, were taken prisoner when they chased the French back over the enemy's palisade.¹²¹ Hill was personally involved in this action and was also wounded when the French attacked. He continued to command his regiment in Flanders in 1710, when it was part of a column which pierced the French lines at Pont-à-Vendin. Hill's then became embroiled in a campaign of manoeuvre as part of the army covering the multitude of sieges which Marlborough undertook that year.¹²² Towards the end of the campaign, Hill requested of Marlborough that he should be permitted to return to England, as he had heard that the army was going to be broken up after the siege (presumably of

¹¹⁸ Burton, Ivor F., 'The Secretary at War and the Administration of the Army during the War of the Spanish Succession' (University of London PhD thesis, 1960), p. 215.

¹¹⁹ Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, VI, p. 365, *The Almanza Casualty Roll*.

¹²⁰ Cannon, *Historical Record of the Eleventh or North Devonshire Regiment of Foot*, p. 23.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24; Falkner, James, *Marlborough's Sieges*, (Stroud, 2007), p. 186.

¹²² Cannon, *Historical Record of the Eleventh or North Devonshire Regiment of Foot*, p. 24; Spain, 'Hill, John', *ODNB*; Chandler, John, *Marlborough as Military Commander*, (London, 2000), p. 277.

Aire). Hill had been in Brussels for the benefit of the waters, possibly to aid his recovery from his wound at Mons.¹²³ This may have been a difficult request.

Hill found himself to be the pawn in the political struggle between his sister, Abigail Masham, and his cousin, the Duchess of Marlborough. It was surely through his connection with Masham that he was promoted to brigadier-general on 1 January 1710.¹²⁴ The catalyst for the schism between the Marlboroughs and the Queen occurred with the death, also in 1710, of the Whig Earl of Essex, a colonel of dragoons and constable of the Tower of London. The decision of whom to appoint to these vacancies was particularly important, but it was Essex's dragoons – one of the most senior regiments in the army – which concerned Hill. Until then, Marlborough, as captain-general, was able to appoint to all military positions, but as the Duchess of Marlborough began to fall out of favour with the Queen and was superseded by Masham, it would only be a matter of time before his authority was challenged. The preference of the Queen, under the influence of Masham, was for Hill to take command of the dragoons.

Marlborough did not support the case for Hill.¹²⁵ Whilst it was true that there may have been many good and experienced officers more deserving of promotion, Marlborough's objection to Hill's selection as a candidate for the colonelcy was political, rather than based on any real assessment of his military ability. After all, it was thanks to Marlborough's patronage that Hill was originally able to secure a regiment in the army.¹²⁶ It was only after the rise of Masham's influence that

¹²³ BL, Add MSS 61289 f. 143, Hill to Marlborough, 29 October 1710.

¹²⁴ Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, VI, p. 18.

¹²⁵ Chandler, *Marlborough as Military Commander*, p. 271, Churchill, Winston S., *Marlborough: His Life and Times*, (London, 1938), IV, pp. 212-213; Hibbert, Christopher, *The Marlboroughs: John and Sarah Churchill, 1650-1714*, (London, 2002), pp. 247-250.

¹²⁶ Holmes, Richard, *Marlborough: England's Fragile Genius*, (London, 2008), p. 23.

Marlborough raised any objections to his further advancement. The Duchess of Marlborough reportedly stated that the Duke thought Hill to be ‘good for nothing’.¹²⁷ However, his reasons are probably not because he doubted Hill’s military capabilities as is generally offered in explanation. The Duchess of Marlborough was particularly opposed to the growing influence of her two cousins, Masham and Harley, and this probably coloured her husband’s judgment of Hill.¹²⁸

Marlborough’s opposition to the appointment was more to do with the obvious challenge to his authority as captain-general and the effect it would have on disaffected officers within the army. Even some of his Whig supporters thought such a power simply conferred patronage upon placemen rather than improved military efficiency. Most importantly, Marlborough was worried about the loss of respect and discipline, both in the army and amongst politicians at home and abroad, if it was seen he did not have the support of the Queen. Such a prospect was soon quelled with the establishment of the Board of General Officers in 1711.¹²⁹ This body took real power over military discipline away from Marlborough, who had already overreached himself in 1709 by requesting the captain-generalcy for life, which raised fears of the creation of another Oliver Cromwell, or the crowning of King John II.¹³⁰ Hill is said to have avoided further embarrassment for Marlborough and the Queen when he asked not to be appointed colonel of the dragoons, but Anne may also have given in to such open hostility from the Duke, particularly as she already managed to appoint her

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹²⁸ BL, Add MSS 61133, f. 201-203, Robert Walpole To Duchess of Marlborough, 28 April 1710; BL, Add MSS 61422 ff. 41-53, 194-198, letters of the Duchess of Marlborough; Morgan, *Queen Anne’s Canadian Expedition of 1711*, p. 10.

¹²⁹ Scouller, R. E., *The Armies of Queen Anne*, (Oxford, 1966), pp. 271, 273.

¹³⁰ Hibbert, *The Marlboroughs*, p. 244; Holmes, *Marlborough*, pp. 414-415.

candidate for constable of the Tower, Earl Rivers.¹³¹ Such open disagreements, occurring at the same time as Sachaverell's impeachment, helped to sweep the Tories to power later in the year, including Hill who became the member for Lostwithiel in Parliament, where Abigail apparently coaxed him to vote against the Whigs.¹³² It is unclear, however, whether Hill wanted advancement in the army to the extent that his sister's ambitions desired.

Hill was made general and commander in chief of the forces raised for the expedition on 1 March 1711,¹³³ the establishment of the staff officers being given three weeks later.¹³⁴ Marlborough was first alerted to the possibility of Hill being commander of the expedition in late February, when some of his regiments were to be taken from him and he consequently tried to impede their transfer. To stall St John, Marlborough was able to take advantage of Hill's seniority, or, rather, lack of it. As the Duke had been asked to submit a list of his Flanders regiments to be sent on the expedition, St John had rejected three of those choices as Major-General Wynne, Brigadier Hamilton and Brigadier Sutton were all regimental colonels senior to Hill. This left only two Quebec regiments with colonels at their head 'when your Grace [Marlborough] has several', implying that more senior regimental colonels were deliberately and mischievously slated by Marlborough for Hill's force.¹³⁵ Clearly, Hill's command had to be unambiguous to provide authority and retain the Queen's

¹³¹ Dumont, Jean, Baron de Carlscreon, *The military history of the late Prince Eugene of Savoy, and of the late John Duke of Marlborough*, vol. III, (Dublin, 1737), p. 357.

¹³² Spain, 'Hill, John', *ODNB*.

¹³³ Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, VI, p. 20.

¹³⁴ TNA, WO 24/75, 25 March 1711.

¹³⁵ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Marlborough, 20 February 1711; Morgan, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711', p. 14; Parke, Gilbert, *Letters and Correspondence, Public and Private, of the Right Honourable Henry St John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke; During the Time He was Secretary of State to Queen Anne...*, (London, 1798), I, pp. 94-101, St John to Marlborough, 13 March 1711.

patronage. The colonels eventually ordered to go upon the expedition to serve under him were all, nevertheless, very experienced.

III: Hill's Subordinates

Seven infantry regiments were transported by Walker's fleet to North America. General Hill, as commander in chief, naturally brought his regiment. The other regiments were Seymour's, Disney's, Kane's, Clayton's, Kirk's and Windress'. Added to this was Colonel Churchill's regiment of marines, which in the early eighteenth century were regarded as being a part of the army, but allocated for sea-service.

William Seymour did not accompany the expedition. Instead, Lieutenant-Colonel Magnus Kempenfelt took his place at the head of the regiment. He had joined the Coldstream Guards in 1685, and was an aide-de-camp in a marine regiment at Vigo in 1702. That he commanded Seymour's for the expedition is confirmed by his timely promotion to lieutenant-colonel of the regiment on 1 May 1711.¹³⁶

Seymour's absence may have been due to issues over seniority as he outranked Hill as a lieutenant-general.¹³⁷ Seymour was returned to Parliament, as member for Newport on the Isle of Wight, in the general election of 1710 and was a staunch Tory, having distanced himself from his former connection with Marlborough. It has been suggested that Seymour was ill during 1711 and Jonathan Swift remarked that the Lieutenant-General had a particular dislike for hot weather, which has caused some

¹³⁶ Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, V, p. 164 n. 146.

¹³⁷ Although Hill was appointed General for the expedition, this may have grated with those who were technically superior. *Ibid.*, VI, p. 20.

speculation about the illness.¹³⁸ Seymour had been a major in the Coldstream Guards in 1692 and had served at Landen the following year,¹³⁹ before commanding a brigade at Cadiz and being wounded at Vigo in 1702.¹⁴⁰ Whilst Seymour was still in command of his regiment when in England, an unspecified dispute arose between himself and Colonel Charles Churchill (of the expedition's marines) over arms.¹⁴¹ Churchill's unit was originally a foot regiment which had become a marine regiment by the end of 1709,¹⁴² yet, under the estimates made for the charges of regiments in 1711, Seymour's was listed as being for sea service.¹⁴³ Perhaps the origin of their dispute with their equipment was connected to this. Churchill was a nephew of Marlborough and became an ensign in 1688, later serving as an aide-de-camp at Blenheim.¹⁴⁴

Colonel Richard Kane was to become quite a famous figure later in his life. He took command of his regiment after Lieutenant-General Macartney had to sell it (instead of receiving the usual punishment of death) after being convicted of raping a clergyman's widow.¹⁴⁵ Incidentally, Macartney was earmarked to command the cancelled 1709 expedition to Quebec.¹⁴⁶ Kane's regiment would likely have been cheap, as it had been decimated at Almansa in 1707. The regiment was brought up to strength when one of its captains, William Fixhall, performed extremely well

¹³⁸ Cruikshanks, Eveline; Handley, Stuart; and Hayton, D. W., (eds), *History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1690-1715*, (Cambridge, 2002), V, pp. 445-446.

¹³⁹ Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, II, p. 73.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, III, p. 239, n. 3.

¹⁴¹ TNA, WO 4/12, Granville to Hyde, 3 March 1711; TNA, SP 44/111 and SP 44/213, St John to Granville, 3 April 1711.

¹⁴² Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, VI, p. 10.

¹⁴³ TNA, WO 24/75, 1711 estimates.

¹⁴⁴ Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, V, Part II, p. 6 n. 31.

¹⁴⁵ Holmes, *Marlborough*, p. 415; Kiernan, V. G., 'Macartney, George (c.1660-1730)', *ODNB*.

¹⁴⁶ HMC, *Portland*, V, 'Memoirs of the Harley Family' (Edward Harley), p. 655.

recruiting in the High Peak area of Derbyshire in 1711.¹⁴⁷ Kane had been given the task, probably by Marlborough, of transferring the Flanders regiments to Walker's fleet. He has been well regarded by history, becoming commander in chief of Gibraltar on two occasions, as well as being twice lieutenant-governor of Minorca before becoming an effective governor in his own right.¹⁴⁸ Kane had a long career before 1711, serving from at least 1692. He was at Namur in 1695 and wounded at Blenheim in 1704 before commanding his regiment at Malplaquet in 1709.¹⁴⁹ He also wrote about military discipline and published a history of the War of the Spanish Succession, which unfortunately does not include his experiences in North America.¹⁵⁰ Eventually rising to the rank of brigadier-general, a nineteenth-century historian stated that Kane 'was one of the best officers of his time, as well as a gentleman of the greatest humanity and generosity...his death was very generally lamented. In a word a noble character'.¹⁵¹

Hill was already acquainted with at least two of his colonels – Clayton and Disney. Jasper Clayton had served as lieutenant-colonel in Hill's regiment from 1706¹⁵² and fought at Almansa. He was lucky enough to escape with the survivors who were not captured there and went on to command the regiment in Hill's absence, until he was exchanged in 1708.¹⁵³ Clayton was also wounded at Mons.¹⁵⁴ His precise service length is unknown, but it appears he was commissioned in 1695 and is

¹⁴⁷ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to recruiting commissioners of Derbyshire, 26 February 1711.

¹⁴⁸ Laurie, Bruce, 'Kane, Richard (1662–1736)', *ODNB*.

¹⁴⁹ Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, III, p. 84, n. 9.

¹⁵⁰ Kane, Richard, *Campaigns of King William and Queen Anne; From 1689, to 1712...*, (London, 1745).

¹⁵¹ O'Callaghan, John Cornelius, *History of the Irish Brigades in the Service of France: From the Revolution in Great Britain and Ireland under James II, to the Revolution in France under Louis XVI*, (Uckfield, 2004), p. 238n.

¹⁵² Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, V, p. 66.

¹⁵³ Cannon, *Historical Record of the Eleventh or North Devonshire Regiment of Foot*, p. 23.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

said to have ‘acquired great celebrity as a gallant and meritorious officer’. Clayton’s regiment was disbanded at the peace, but he gained a new one later in 1713. He served under the Duke of Argyle during the Jacobite rebellion of 1715, commanding a brigade at Sheriffmuir.¹⁵⁵ Clayton also became governor of Dunkirk and commander in chief of Gibraltar,¹⁵⁶ where he served in the siege of 1727.¹⁵⁷ He was promoted lieutenant-general before being killed at Dettingen in 1743.¹⁵⁸ His death was even noted by an adjutant present at the battle – James Wolfe had received ‘the sad news of the death of as good and brave a man as any amongst us, General Clayton, who was killed by a musket ball’.¹⁵⁹ It can be surmised that Clayton, through his regimental connections, had a close relationship with the Hill family, as his Will bequeathed £100 to the sister of Abigail Masham and John Hill (both having died several years beforehand) to ‘buy her a ring’. The same was awarded to Baron Masham who was also his executor.¹⁶⁰ Clayton’s Will was indicative of his closeness to the Hill family, but also of the loyalty he owed such patronage. His advancement, by both Whig and Tory administrations, indicates that he was a competent officer, which was reinforced by his service history and suggests that he was not overly political, despite his Tory patrons. His service against the Jacobites confirms this at a time when many officers were losing their positions with the arrival of the Hanoverians.

¹⁵⁵ Cannon, *Historical Record of the Fourteenth or Buckinghamshire Regiment of Foot*, pp. 93-94.

¹⁵⁶ Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, VI, p. 183; Laurie, ‘Kane, Richard’, *ODNB*. St John recommended him to Shrewsbury to garrison Gibraltar, Parke, *Letters and Correspondence*, IV, pp. 489-490, 9 March 1713.

¹⁵⁷ Clayton was lieutenant-governor according to Cannon, *Historical Record of the Fourteenth or Buckinghamshire Regiment of Foot*, pp. 94-95.

¹⁵⁸ Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, IV, p. 130, n. 5.

¹⁵⁹ Reilly, Robin, *Wolfe of Quebec*, (London, 2001), p. 27.

¹⁶⁰ Hepburn, Henry F., *The Clayton Family*, Papers of the Historical Society of Delaware, (Wilmington, 1904), pp. 15-16.

Colonel Henry Disney, (sometimes Desaulnais), was a French Huguenot officer who had taken command of the Earl of Islay's regiment in 1710.¹⁶¹ He had served since 1694, most of that time being spent in the prestigious 1st Foot Guards.¹⁶² He served at Blenheim on the general staff as an aide-de-camp. Disney also served as an intermediary between St John and Drummond to settle the former's accounts with the merchant.¹⁶³ St John noted in a letter to Drummond that both Hill and Disney had arrived together in England in November 1710, implying an early connection between them.¹⁶⁴ Disney also mediated between Harley and St John during the breakdown in their relationship.¹⁶⁵

Colonel Percy Kirk was wounded and captured at Almansa and died a lieutenant-general.¹⁶⁶ He was the son of the more famous General Percy Kirk who served with distinction at Tangier, in Ireland and in Flanders. Owing to this, the younger Percy was commissioned into the army when only a year old, but first saw action at Vigo and was later stationed at Gibraltar, like many of his contemporaries.¹⁶⁷ The little-known Colonel William Windress is thought to have served throughout the war.¹⁶⁸

The colonels also needed artillery support to fulfil their mission at Quebec. Colonel Richard King had been appointed to command the expedition's train of artillery, which was organised by the Board of Ordnance as the Royal Regiment of

¹⁶¹ TNA, WO 4/12, Granville to Brydges, 14 April 1711; Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, VI, p. 11.

¹⁶² Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, V, Part II, p. 6, n. 34.

¹⁶³ Parke, *Letters and Correspondence*, I, p. 11, St John to Drummond, 27 October 1710.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, I, p. 19, St John to Drummond, 14 November 1710.

¹⁶⁵ HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of His Grace the Duke of Portland*, V, p. 468, 'The Earl of Oxford's Account of Public Affairs'.

¹⁶⁶ Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, II, p. 136, n. 22.

¹⁶⁷ Wauchope, Piers, 'Kirke, Percy (1683-1741)' contained in 'Kirke, Percy (d. 1691)', *ODNB*. The spelling without the 'e' has been adopted throughout this thesis, as it was the spelling generally used in the contemporary documents.

¹⁶⁸ Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, III, p. 239, n. 2.

Artillery had yet to be established. He was a very experienced character having seen much action and held a great deal of responsibility during the war in Flanders. King had been a captain in the Royal Scots Fusiliers but, having been trained as a gunner, his job consisted of many roles. Other than being an infantry captain, he served occasionally with artillery units and became an ordnance stores officer. He had served at Blenheim as an engineer under the famous Colonel Holcroft Blood¹⁶⁹ and he became assistant-quartermaster-general to William Cadogan – Marlborough's capable quartermaster-general who organised his march on the Danube. Later, at the siege of Menin, King wrote to an associate: 'I have very little time to myself', as he was responsible for the victuals, guns and ammunition, whilst also serving in the trenches as an engineer and in the batteries as a gunner. It is difficult to disagree with R. E. Scouller, that 'few will doubt that he earned his promotion to colonel in 1710'.¹⁷⁰ King later became clerk of the deliveries at the Board of Ordnance, in 1713. He was swept from this office, along with many suspected Tories, in the widespread political upheaval caused by the succession of George I.¹⁷¹

Clayton's and Kane's regiments did not survive the post-war cull of surplus units and were disbanded.¹⁷² Kane was also the only colonel to be put on the half-pay list after the death of Anne.¹⁷³ These colonels would surely have all performed well at Quebec as long as they were subject to competent leadership. Moreover, their

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, V, Part II, pp. 8, 10, n. 18.

¹⁷⁰ Scouller, *The Armies of Queen Anne*, pp. 65-66.

¹⁷¹ Tomlinson, H. C., *Guns and Government: The Ordnance Office Under the Later Stuarts*, Royal Historical Society, series no. 15, (London, 1979), p. 225.

¹⁷² The remaining five survived the war and later became the 2nd (Kirk's), 4th (Seymour's), 11th (Hill's), 36th (Disney's) and 37th (Windress's) foot regiments. Over the years these regiments have merged with and evolved into several other units. The 2nd and 36th regiments are today amongst the antecedents of the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment; the 4th foot is now represented in the Duke of Lancaster's regiment; the 11th has been incorporated into the 1st Battalion, The Rifles; and the 37th later became part of the 2nd Battalion, Mercian regiment.

¹⁷³ National Army Museum, 8211-124, *Army List 1713* (A list for *His Majesty* so possibly compiled in 1714).

regiments were experienced and would have posed formidable opponents for any enemies that would have been encountered.

IV: Conclusion

Walker had proven himself as a competent commander. His experiences were wide and varied and only lacked involvement in some of the more famous, but rare, naval engagements of the war. The service of the captains achieving their seniority on the same day as Walker illustrate that he was entrusted with higher command during Whig rule even prior to his appointment to lead the Quebec squadron. Walker's combat experience was not extensive, but the Guadeloupe expedition had shown his ability to independently command, for many months, a naval force thousands of miles from home port. It was also indicative of the poor cooperation that was prevalent at the time between land and naval commanders in joint operations, which included Rooke and the Duke of Ormonde at Cadiz in 1702.¹⁷⁴

Walker's qualifications for command in 1711 were nevertheless considerable. His extensive experience of convoy command, particularly in the Atlantic, was exactly what was required. Walker had been appointed commodore of a squadron on numerous occasions and he had held command of many important third-rate ships-of-the-line – the backbone of the Royal Navy and the most important ships for trade protection. He was also given important roles in being made a flag-captain, switching from convoy duty to commanding a squadron in defence of the realm in 1708, and being appointed captain-resident of Plymouth – all whilst the Whigs were in ministerial control. His role in 1711 was to convoy transports to North America – a

¹⁷⁴ Harding, 'Sailors and Gentlemen of Parade', p. 40; McLay, K. A. J., 'Sir Francis Wheler's Caribbean and North American Expedition, 1693: A Case Study in Combined Operational Command during the Reign of William III', *War in History*, vol. XIV, no. 4, (2007), p. 384.

role which did not require an officer of flag rank. The Tories had given him a knighthood and further promotion, but this was surely a natural progression for such a career. After all, Hill, the object of St John's authorisation, did not receive a knighthood. Walker's history indicates that he was therefore a natural choice to lead the expedition at sea.

Like Walker, Hill had experience of overseas operations and had understood the logistics of transporting troops by sea. He had twice raised and trained his regiment after its ranks had been decimated in battle. At the head of his regiment, Hill marched through the harsh terrain of Iberia and on the fertile plains of Flanders, where he fought in skirmish, battle and in siege, and also formed part of a garrison. This was all valuable experience for a Quebec expedition. Compared to some other capable commanders, Hill may not have been the most ideal candidate to command in North America, but he was a suitable choice – a political appointee he may have been, but Hill was also an experienced soldier, knowledgeable in tactical command. Whether Hill would have been able to effectively command such a large force, in the challenging Canadian environment, remains open to speculation. What cannot be questioned, however, is his bravery displayed both at Almansa and at Mons. Furthermore, he was backed by some very able regimental colonels. At first glance, despite the political necessity of appointing him to command, Hill appears an odd nomination. Yet his previous service, in conjunction with the expert advice his colonels could offer, suggests that he was an acceptable choice and he was only opposed by Marlborough because it challenged his authority and offended the tempestuous nature of his Duchess.

CHAPTER 3

ORGANISING THE EXPEDITION

Great preparations were required in Britain for the 1711 expedition, as her American colonies proved too weak to independently neutralise the threat posed by Quebec. With proper organisation and the necessary equipment and supplies, Britain could easily conquer the French North American colonies. In doing so, the British would gain trade and resources, whilst providing security and expansionist potential to the New Englanders after years of Canadian incursions and molestation. This was precisely what Samuel Vetch had envisioned, although Lieutenant-General Francis Nicholson¹ would ultimately supplant him in organisational control of the colonial aspect of this venture.

In order for such a campaign to succeed, Henry St John needed the forces to fight and hold a swathe of remote territory, half-way across the world, and for it to survive a possible counter-attack in the alien environment of a Canadian winter. Seasoned troops were thus required. The veteran regiments chosen consisted of men who had already been numbed by the excesses of war and the monotony of a protracted campaign. They would add the military professionalism which was not demonstrated by the excitable colonials in their limited operations. In addition, it would be necessary to equip a strong train of artillery to overcome Quebec's defences. Colonial and Indian forces were essential for the overland expedition to Montreal as they knew how to operate in the difficult terrain. Finally, a naval squadron had to be assembled to safely convoy the regiments across the Atlantic and up the St Lawrence

¹ Colonel Nicholson was commissioned a lieutenant-general of all the forces raised for the expedition. Hill was commissioned as a general of the forces in the expedition. Both dated 1 March 1711. Dalton, Charles, (ed.), *English Army Lists and Commission Registers, 1661-1714*, VI, (London, 1904), p. 20.

River. The French Navy, suffering from neglect, was not a great threat, but French privateers were a feared and capable foe, and posed a particular menace to allied transports. Unfortunately, St John did not have the right qualifications to assemble such an unprecedented force, despite his prior experience in the war office.² His poor organisation was exacerbated by his obsession with secrecy which hampered the expedition from its very conception, as he could not garner the best advice for such an endeavour, and consequently left the fleet undersupplied.

A blueprint for the operation had already been outlined in Vetch's *Canada Survey'd*. The force destined for Quebec was stronger than Vetch had proposed. It comprised of seven infantry regiments; a battalion of marines; a train of artillery equipped with twenty cannon; two bomb ketches; several men-of-war and frigates; plus colonial militia and Indian allies from the Five Nations. With such a fine and varied array of units the plan seemed simple enough for St John. Preparations had begun in earnest in January 1711: the train was made ready, miscellaneous supplies were ordered and investigations into which regiments could be suitably employed had begun. Yet this did not take place early enough and time was against them. Equipment orders took too long to be fulfilled; regiments had to be assembled from across Britain and Flanders; ships needed to be supplied with months of provisions and the entire logistical effort to bring together all elements of the force at Spithead, in time to operate in the short Canadian campaigning season, threatened the expedition's dispatch. Preparation was the key to success and that, unfortunately, came far too late.

² Trevelyan, G. M., *England Under Queen Anne*, (London, 1948), III, p. 119.

St John's objectives were clear. To maximise the potential for personal glory and military success, most aspects of the expedition were shrouded in secrecy.³ To hide the objective from the French, St John even kept it a secret from the likes of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty and the Board of Ordnance. Owing to the expedition's sheer scale, however, it was obvious St John could not keep the preparations entirely secret, but he hoped its purpose would not be revealed. After all, the Admiralty was required to attach a squadron of warships for escort, and the Ordnance had to be consulted over the creation of a new train of artillery and the supplying of sufficient arms for both the veteran regiments and the colonials. Such preparations were noticed, especially with the withdrawal of the regiments from Flanders. Huge quantities of new uniforms and equipment could not be masked from public curiosity either.

Provisions were limited, on the orders of St John, to last three months in order to deflect suspicion away from a possible American expedition to one in Iberia. This was a clever ploy as resources earmarked for the previous Quebec expeditions had been diverted to the latter theatre. Also, the near-capitulation of the allies in the Peninsula during 1710 would indicate the need to reverse the defeats there. St John's covert strategy compelled the expedition to take on additional provisions at Boston – delaying the expedition for an unreasonable amount of time. To prepare the colonies, Nicholson had to cross the Atlantic before Rear-Admiral Walker and organise not only the stockpiling of victuals at Boston, but also the raising of the colonial militia. It was essential that the colonies began preparations as soon as possible.

³ 'All was secret – plans, numbers, destination, contracts – all was in his [St John's] private control'. Churchill, Winston S., *Marlborough: His Life and Times*, (London, 1938), IV, p. 393.

St John's clandestine behaviour meant he was unable to make use of expert advice in his planning, and the execution of his project would take much longer given the need to resupply at Boston, when the expedition's objectives would become obvious to the Canadians. Needless to say, such actions jeopardised the successful outcome of the expedition.

I: Initial Preparations

St John was solely in control of planning the expedition, although he was not such an unlikely character for this role as he had acquired great experience in the handling of armies in his role as secretary at war earlier in Anne's reign.⁴ He may have initiated preparations as early as December 1710 when he requested a summary of the state of the naval vessels⁵ and the foot regiments,⁶ and alerted the Admiralty that they should advise the Victualling Commissioners that 'a larger quantity of victuals than has usually been provided' would soon be required and that the current seasonal produce should therefore be acquired without delay.⁷

The Admiralty and Victualling Office needed further clarification. St John only expanded with an opaque answer: 'considerable embarkation of troops may in all probability be required for the service of the ensuing year, so that a larger quantity of victuals than is necessary for the 40,000 men, voted by Parliament ought to be provided'.⁸ The details of what victuals needed ordering was deferred to them,

⁴ Dickinson, H. T., *Bolingbroke*, (London, 1970), p. 44; Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*, III, p. 119.

⁵ The National Archives (hereafter cited as TNA), ADM 1/4094/233, St John to Admiralty, 3 December 1710.

⁶ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Granville, 23 December 1710.

⁷ *Ibid.*, St John to Admiralty, 23 December 1710.

⁸ TNA, ADM 1/4094/281, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty, 26 December 1710. The 40,000 was the army voted for service in Flanders, Scouller, R. E., *The Armies of Queen Anne*, (Oxford, 1966), pp. 80-81.

despite St John revealing no clue to the purpose or strength of these additional soldiers. A further letter from the Admiralty ‘desiring to have a more particular information of the quantity of provisions which will be necessary’ was met by a hazy and uncommitted reply two weeks later in January. St John explained ‘that for many reasons it is as yet impossible to ascertain the exact number of men that will be made use of for Her Majesty’s service’.⁹ It was apparent that St John only had an aim and had yet to work out the detail. Nevertheless, there were difficulties in securing such a quantity of victuals because the ‘flesh is very far advanced...especially pork’.¹⁰ Finally, after listing his excuses for his lack of clarity, St John gave an indication as to what the Admiralty should be planning for. He estimated that there would have to be enough supplies for at least 5,000 men at six (later three) months’ full allowance. St John also alluded to a figure of 1,800 men for two months already given to the Admiralty, to be included in addition to the 5,000.¹¹ This must refer to the colonial forces to be raised. Considering the timing, the numbers involved and St John’s evasive tone in his letters, this exchange was clearly in preparation for the Quebec expedition.

Another clue to St John’s early preparations occurred when he invited Admiralty Secretary Josiah Burchett and Commissioner of the Transports Thomas Coleby to visit his house on German Street, at separate times, on 31 December 1710. This was all rather unusual, and no detail is laid out in the letter; however, they were two key intermediaries in the planning phase of the Quebec operation.¹² Although it can be assumed that they aided St John in determining what would be required in

⁹ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty, 5 January 1711.

¹⁰ TNA, ADM 2/366/95, Admiralty to St John, 4 January 1711.

¹¹ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty, 5 January 1711.

¹² *Ibid.*, St John to Burchett and Coleby (Transports), 30 December 1710.

terms of naval support and transports at these meetings, it is almost certain that they were unaware of the expedition's destination.

II: The Train of Artillery

The specifics of organising the expedition began at the Board of Ordnance. The effect of the expedition's artillery would have been significant in determining the outcome of an attack on a Quebec bristling with approximately seventy cannon. The Board's correspondence about the expedition is indicative of the negative effects the secrecy caused as its officers were unaware of its purpose or destination. These letters also demonstrate the haste in the planning and organisation of the equipment necessary to mount a siege. The Duke of Marlborough was master-general of the ordnance, but much of the work done in his name was actually carried out by the principal officers of the Board. These had a wealth of experience behind them and were responsible for all materials of war, including artillery, engineers, barracks, the manufacture of arms and the transport of its equipment.¹³

Colonel King was doubtless the right man to take charge of the expedition's train. He had already demonstrated that he understood the intricacies of siege warfare, knowing how to supply, engineer and conduct a siege. He had enough experience in large-scale continental warfare to enable him to confidently command expeditionary artillery. The only thing which he presumably did not have any experience of was bomb ketches. Coordinating his artillery with these vessels would certainly give him more options at Quebec. It is not clear whether he knew of his

¹³ Scouller, *The Armies of Queen Anne*, p. 36.

mission before he sailed; he was appointed to command the train on 1 March – the same day that General Hill was made commander in chief.¹⁴

With an enormous amount of stores necessary to field an artillery train and to equip thousands of soldiers, the planning stage had to begin months in advance. St John started only in January 1711, ordering 2,000 muskets, each with 500 rounds of ammunition, which were to be placed in storeships on the Thames.¹⁵ This was the first recorded example of direct preparations for the expedition.¹⁶ These muskets were intended to equip the colonial forces and were to be transported across the Atlantic with Nicholson on his mission to mobilise the colonies.

The Earl of Dartmouth initially assisted in the preparations in his capacity as secretary of state for the southern department, his involvement possibly emanating from the fact that, strictly speaking, he should have possessed political control of colonial operations.¹⁷ Dartmouth began preparing the train in January 1711 by demanding the provision of twelve twenty-four-pounder cannon; eight twelve-pounder cannon; 1,000 rounds of shot; three bomb ketches; 5,000 hand-grenades and harness for 500 men. He added: 'together with a suitable number of officers and whatever else your Grace shall judge proper for such a train'.¹⁸ Evidently, the Board was asked for its opinion on the composition of a train of artillery without knowing all of the facts surrounding the expedition. Furthermore, it is possible that the number of cannon ordered was an entirely arbitrary figure, unless King had been consulted. One

¹⁴ Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, VI, p. 182.

¹⁵ TNA, SP 41/34/106 and SP 44/213, St John to the Duke of Marlborough, 4 January 1711.

¹⁶ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Marlborough, 8 January 1711.

¹⁷ Hattendorf, John B., *England in the War of the Spanish Succession: A Study of the English View and Conduct of Grand Strategy, 1702-1712*, (New York; London, 1987), p. 30; Morgan, William Thomas, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711', *Bulletin of the Departments of History and Political and Economic Science in Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario, Canada*, no. 56, (May 1928), p. 5.

¹⁸ Most of Marlborough's correspondence was actually handled by the Board of Ordnance for practicality. TNA, SP 41/34, Dartmouth to Master-General of the Ordnance, 16 January 1711.

version of *Canada Survey'd* gave no indication of what artillery support may suffice, bar two bomb vessels, yet another stated the need for thirty cannon and three ketches.¹⁹ The artillery pieces and their stores were expected to be available by the end of February, leaving just over a month for them to be organised.

Dartmouth also asked the Ordnance Board to provide three bomb ketches. These were, of course, naval vessels and the Board had no authority to provide them. Naval vessels came within the Admiralty's jurisdiction, but confusion may lie in the fact that the Ordnance was responsible for naval mortars and cannon.²⁰ Dartmouth's mistake was duly pointed out to him²¹ and he rectified his error the same day, sending his request to the Admiralty.²² The Ordnance, nevertheless, had to liaise with the Admiralty regarding the provision of their mortars.²³ The *Basilisk* bomb ketch was immediately made ready, but the Admiralty noted that out of the three in home waters, the other two bomb vessels were in a state of disrepair.²⁴ A month after being ordered, the requirement for bomb vessels was reduced to two.²⁵ St John instead ordered four land mortars in place of the third ketch.²⁶ His reasons were unspecified but the lack of availability due to poor seaworthiness can only be compounded by the fact that there were relatively few of these vessels surviving in the navy at this time.

¹⁹ Headlam, Cecil, (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and the West Indies, 1708-1709*, (London, 1922), no. 60, *Canada Survey'd*, p. 50; Vetch, Samuel, *Canada Survey'd* (1708), LAC, MG11-CO 323.

²⁰ Scouller, *The Armies of Queen Anne*, p. 178.

²¹ TNA, SP 41/34/109, Ordnance to Dartmouth, 18 January 1711.

²² TNA, SP 44/214 and ADM 1/4094, Dartmouth to Admiralty, 18 January 1711.

²³ TNA, ADM 1/4004, Ordnance to Admiralty, 18 January 1711.

²⁴ TNA, ADM 2/366/99, Admiralty to Dartmouth, 19 January 1711.

²⁵ TNA, ADM 1/4004, Ordnance to Admiralty, 15 February 1711.

²⁶ TNA, SP 41/34, St John to Marlborough, 13 February 1710; TNA, ADM 1/4094, St John to Admiralty, 17 February 1711; TNA, SP44/213, St John to Admiralty, 17 February 1711.

St John also wanted ‘four of the smallest brass-field-pieces’ and twenty coehorn mortars, but it is not known if they were ever delivered.²⁷

After compiling a list of possible stores for King’s train, the Board’s ignorance of the expedition’s purpose was exposed when they referred the matter to Marlborough. The letter they sent concluded by admitting that they were unaware as to the purpose these stores were required for:

We being perfect strangers to the nature of the service intended, may...have omitted particulars very necessary, and may have inserted other species not so proper, but, that we submit to the judgement of these who are acquainted with the design...they may be of opinion, that the charge of some of the officers, as well as of the stores, and, freight, may be saved...All which is nevertheless humbly submitted to your Grace’s better judgement.²⁸

This clearly illustrates the folly of the secrecy enveloping the preparations, where the organisers had to guess what the expedition might need without knowing the necessary details.

In response to Dartmouth’s request for cannon and equipment, the Board drew up an exhaustive inventory with estimated costs amounting to over £26,000, including transport, freight, salaries and the bomb vessels. With such huge costs, the Board became wary as this was ‘considerable a sum of money, for which at present nothing is given by Parliament’. This unorthodox method of organising the train caused the Board to ask Marlborough to intercede with the Queen in order to secure the necessary funds.²⁹ The money may have been easily found as the Master-General of

²⁷ TNA, SP 41/34, St John to Marlborough, 28 February 1711; TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Ordnance, 1 March 1711.

²⁸ TNA, SP 41/34, Ordnance to Marlborough, 20 January 1711.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Ordnance to Marlborough, 20 January 1711.

the Ordnance was uniquely allowed to spend money not allocated by Parliament, in the case of emergencies and other unforeseen circumstances.³⁰ Even so, Marlborough was clearly powerless to hinder these preparations in the new political climate in which he found himself.

The twenty cannon were also prepared for close-quarters combat as each gun was allocated ten rounds of 'tin cases filled with musket shot'. The artillery pieces were not listed in the expenses estimates for the train, presumably as they were on loan and were expected to be returned after the completion of the expedition. However, if successful, the cannon may have been needed to defend Quebec from a counter-assault if the French guns had been spiked. In addition to this material, 106 soldiers of the Ordnance were allocated to man King's train.³¹

The Ordnance records evidently show that they had expert officers, along with an able administrative staff to keep track of their varied and expensive equipment. Despite lacking the knowledge of the expedition's objectives, the office compiled a list of stores, the number of officers and men to attend and even the names of those officers appointed, only four days after receiving Dartmouth's original letter. The expedition's expenses were already beginning to accumulate as Commissary Hawys, the train's paymaster, was ordered to commence paying the chosen officers from 1 February.³²

To comply with his desire to send a professional force, a particular engineer had been specifically requested by St John. Captain de Bauff of Hartop's Walloon

³⁰ Scouller, *The Armies of Queen Anne*, p. 36.

³¹ TNA, SP 41/34, Ordnance to Marlborough, 20 January 1711.

³² *Ibid.*, Ordnance to Marlborough, 20 January 1711; TNA, SP 41/34, Ordnance to Commissary Hawys, 1 March 1711.

regiment was offered a ‘handsome reward’ if he would attend the expedition.³³ The reason for poaching a foreigner may be explained by the fact that the British often did not possess sufficient knowledge or expertise in siegecraft and often relied upon Dutch engineers.³⁴ St John was ultimately disappointed, as he could ‘hardly believe [de Bauff’s]...circumstances to be so good as to incline him to refuse going’.³⁵ De Bauff’s reputation must have been exceptional as St John then implored the Earl of Orrery³⁶ to make a bargain with him. George Vane and James Moore were sent as engineers in his place, under King.³⁷

St John took complete control of the coordination of the artillery supplies in February during Dartmouth’s ‘indisposition’. It is to be suspected that this may be due to the beginning of St John’s rift with Harley and his creation of a new faction in Parliament to which Dartmouth was opposed. St John immediately requested that the Board provide further stores for the train including extra grenades, 1,000 muskets and four petards – clearly with the intention of dealing with gates and fortifications.³⁸ Various adjustments were consequently made to the Ordnance’s accounts for these extra stores. They reported back that this caused a significant increase in costs of thirty and thirty-five per cent for the stores and pay of extra officers respectively, and appealed to Marlborough to ask the Treasury to provide the funds for these stores.³⁹

³³ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Orrery, 20 February 1711.

³⁴ Jones, J. R., *Marlborough*, (Cambridge, 1993), p. 189.

³⁵ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Orrery, 13 March 1711.

³⁶ Orrery was against Marlborough who had complained of his advancement to Drummond, Jones, *Marlborough*, pp. 199-200.

³⁷ TNA, SP 41/34, Ordnance to Marlborough, 20 January 1711; TNA, SP 41/34, Ordnance to Commissary Hawys, 1 March 1711.

³⁸ Including: 600 barrels of musket balls; 2,000 hand Grenades; 700 barrels of powder; 4,000 sandbags; 1,000 muskets; four petards; and 20,000 flints. TNA, SP 41/34, St John to Marlborough, 13 February 1710 [1711].

³⁹ £17,313 and £4,812 respectively. TNA, SP 41/34, Ordnance to Marlborough, 17 February 1710 [1711]. Pay in this document was for six months, so the figure has been adjusted to comply with a year’s pay given in the previous list for £3,558. The stores had previously been £13,227 including freight costs, *ibid.*, Ordnance to Marlborough, 20 January 1711.

The Northern Secretary also informed Marlborough that King had ‘proposed some small alterations to be made in the list of officers and attendants for the train’. As master-general, Marlborough had complete control over appointments in the Ordnance, but the Tory principles of St John and King may have found some Whig officers objectionable. It can also be inferred that King may have been privy to the details of the expedition at this point. This item of correspondence also announced that only three months’ provisions should be placed on board the vessels for the members of the train, which necessitated the acquisition of further stores at Boston.⁴⁰

The Commissioners of Victualling were ordered in mid-February to provide those three months’ provisions for the men of the train.⁴¹ St John’s lack of organisational knowledge may have been exposed when he had originally informed the Ordnance that three months’ provisions would be required for their men – something which their department had no influence over. Defending himself, St John stated ‘I was very far from being ignorant that it was not in your province to furnish the said provisions, but thought...to let you know’.⁴² This was hardly considerate of him, as the Board was still oblivious of the purpose of its men and materiel. However, this does not necessarily imply that St John was ignorant – it may have been a clumsy effort to disseminate disinformation, the Board thus being allowed to guess that his expedition would be heading for Mediterranean waters.

The officers of the Board worked as swiftly as promised with all of the demands placed upon them and reported on 24 February that ‘we have lost no time in putting aboard transport ships a train of artillery, with stores, for an intended

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, St John to Marlborough, 13 February 1710 [1711].

⁴¹ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Commissioners of Victualling; Admiralty; and Ordnance, 16 February 1711.

⁴² *Ibid.*, St John to Ordnance, 16 February 1711.

expedition, which we hope will be ready by the latter end of the next week'.⁴³ They were therefore able to meet their 1 March deadline. For reasons unknown, St John declared that items previously ordered, including 'the spades, shovels, pickaxes...need not be provided'.⁴⁴ This was unusual, as St John asked a fortnight later to be quickly provided with an almost identical list: 'the iron-work of 1,500 pick-axes, 2,000 spades, 2,500 shovels, 1,000 bill hooks ready fitted', indicating a lack of control over part of the ordering process.⁴⁵

Difficulties in recruiting were encountered as the only other aspect of the train that was not predicted to be ready by 1 March was the requirement for forty matrosses (gunners' assistants).⁴⁶ The Board suggested they could be taken from regiments that were to remain in England, 'which will be an advantage and encouragement to the said men, the pay being twelve pence per diem'.⁴⁷ Eight transports were allocated to convey the train to North America.⁴⁸ The five vessels carrying the stores and

⁴³ The Board perhaps addressed this to Dartmouth because they may have thought he was still in control of the ordering, TNA, SP 41/34, Ordnance to Dartmouth, 24 February 1710 [1711].

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, St John to Marlborough, 13 February 1710 [1711].

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, St John to Marlborough, 28 February 1711; TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Ordnance, 1 March 1711.

⁴⁶ Matrosses were artillery soldiers who help the gunners in 'traversing, sponging, loading, and firing the guns, etc.' They were also equipped with muskets to guard the store wagons on the march and assist in the event one should break down, Anon, *A Dictionary explaining the most difficult terms made use of in fortification, Gunnery, and the whole compass of the military art*, (Dublin, 1747), p. 26. Sixty-eight matrosses had been recruited in the colonies for the abandoned 1709 expedition, Chartrand, René, *Colonial American Troops, 1610-1774*, (Oxford, 2002), I, p. 15. Vetch commanded them, Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, VI, p. 288.

⁴⁷ TNA, SP 41/34, Ordnance to Dartmouth, 24 February 1710. Privates of foot were only paid 8d per day; men of the Ordnance were paid more as they were specialists, Scouller, *The Armies of Queen Anne*, Appendix G, p. 377.

⁴⁸ Walker, Hovenden, 'A Journal: Or Full Account of the Late Expedition to Canada' in Graham, Gerald S. (ed.), 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec, 1711', *Navy Records Society*, vol. XCIV, (1953) (hereafter cited as Walker, 'Journal', appendix, p. 179, 'The several transports...'. These were the *Rebecca Ann Blessing* carrying the ordnance stores; the *Prince Eugene*, *Dolphin*, *Mary*, and *Harbin Galley* carrying the ammunition; the *Friends Increase* and *Marlborough* carrying the bomb shells; and the tender *Success Pink* also carrying 'General Hill's provision'. Hill's tender was allocated to him on 22 March, TNA, ADM 1/4094, St John to Admiralty.

ammunition were ready to sail on 2 March and only required an escort before their departure from the Thames to the rendezvous at Spithead.⁴⁹

Little difficulty, therefore, was encountered by the Ordnance in organising this train, bar a shortfall in relatively unskilled manpower. It had taken a little under two months to meet St John's demands. The armies of Europe still had a number of months left in winter quarters, so the Board may have been able to concentrate effectively on this task and all was prepared a month before Rear-Admiral Walker's installation as commander. The train under Colonel King appears to have been a very effective and competent force.⁵⁰ St John's insistence that they be provided with only three months' provisions let down its efficient mobilisation. Nevertheless, the speed and efficiency with which the Ordnance responded to both Dartmouth's and St John's demands, despite their ignorance as to their purpose, was impressive. Unfortunately, chaotic organisation elsewhere would ultimately render the Board's 1 March deadline irrelevant.

III: Nicholson's Dispatch

It was imperative that Nicholson quickly arrived in North America to begin preparations there, but the colonies also needed a supply of arms. James Blake was a London merchant who had been personally contracted by St John to provide supplies for the expedition. On 5 January an order was signed for various arms, accoutrements and clothing amounting to almost £3,000 in value. These goods were to complement

⁴⁹ TNA, ADM 1/4004, Ordnance to Admiralty, 2 March 1711.

⁵⁰ David Chandler has mixed the facts somewhat concerning the train, but suggests that there was thirty cannon, four mortars and four petards in 'Col. Richard King's Expeditionary Train' of 1 February 1711. The additional ten cannon may have been these smaller regimental pieces. Chandler additionally lists a 'Quebec Train' of May 1711 with no guns, but of course, these were one and the same. Chandler, David, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, (Staplehurst, 1990), p. 169.

the 2,000 muskets provided by the Ordnance – St John’s initial preparation described earlier.⁵¹ The equipment provided by both the Ordnance and Blake for Nicholson were evenly divided and loaded onto the transports, *Joseph* and *Neptune*, in early February.⁵² St John again shared little information with the Commissioners of Transports. He told them simply that the transports were required ‘for the greater security and better performance of the service’ and should be readied immediately so that they could be convoyed to Portsmouth.⁵³ Nicholson needed to sail to raise the colonial militia and procure extra supplies far in advance of Walker’s arrival. The vastness of the American colonies meant that this would take a long time once he was there.

Admiralty assistance was needed to convoy these important stores across the Atlantic. The tasking of two frigates⁵⁴ to escort the transports, initially to Portsmouth, met with delay that could not be afforded, as it was imperative that Nicholson transmitted the Queen’s orders to begin preparations to the unwitting colonial governors.⁵⁵ St John therefore pressed for the two frigates to be readied without delay and demanded constant updates on their progress.⁵⁶ The transports and their escorts were scheduled to have departed in January with three months’ victuals.⁵⁷ However, only one frigate was available as most were needed to escort Marlborough who was setting out to the continent for his final campaign.⁵⁸

⁵¹ Blake delivered his order on 29 January. TNA, SP 44/213, Transport Office ‘An account of stores...’, 2 February 1711; St John to Paymaster Brydges, 19 May 1711.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Transport Office ‘An account of stores...’, 2 February 1711.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, St John to Commissioners of Transports, 16 January 1711.

⁵⁴ The Admiralty was first consulted on the matter by St John on 4 January 1711, TNA, ADM 1/4094/294. The ships were the *Sapphire*, TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Burchett, 14 January 1711; and the *Leopard*, Walker, ‘Journal’, p. 100, 25 June 1711.

⁵⁵ TNA, SP 44/213, Instructions to Nicholson, 21 February 1711.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, St John to Admiralty, 11 January 1711.

⁵⁷ One of 168 tons, the other 230 tons. TNA, SP 41/213, St John to Admiralty, 15 January 1711.

⁵⁸ TNA, ADM 2/366/106, Admiralty to St John, 8 February 1711.

Whilst maintaining secrecy around his plans, St John was not very clear about his requirements for the escorts. So that the Lords of the Admiralty could give orders to the two frigates ‘with more clearness’, they were informed that two transports⁵⁹ with stores were to be convoyed by the *Sapphire* to Portsmouth, where they would be joined by the *Leopard* for their onward voyage. St John further informed the Admiralty that they were to comply with Coleby’s directions as to the furnishing of the frigates.⁶⁰ The extent of control that St John had over the expedition was absolute, and allowed him to bully various institutions without being held accountable to Parliament. Bypassing the Admiralty, he demanded a direct interview with Captain Cook, of the *Leopard*.⁶¹ The ships were ready to receive the ordnance stores on 18 January⁶² and Coleby was informed that he should immediately begin loading, although additional stores had yet to be delivered.⁶³

The secrecy of this mission extended to Captains Cockburn and Cook, of the *Sapphire* and *Leopard* frigates respectively, assigned to convoy Nicholson and the transports. They were instructed to open their orders only once they had passed forty degrees of latitude.⁶⁴ St John’s deception was again evident, as this parallel runs from New York to the middle of the Iberian Peninsula, thus prolonging uncertainty as to their destination and implying a southern European objective. As these vessels were to accompany Nicholson and the instructions for the colonial governors for the preparing of the colonies for the expedition (to be thrown overboard if met by an

⁵⁹ The transports for North America had to hold 220 tons of stores and were to be in good condition so as ‘not to retard the convoy that will go with them’. TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Commissioners of Transports, 15 January 1711.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, St John to Admiralty, 16 January 1711.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, St John to Admiralty, 17 January 1711.

⁶² *Ibid.*, St John to Burchett and Marlborough, 18 January 1711.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, St John to Coleby, 19 January 1711.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Instructions and secret instructions to Cockburn and Cook, 6 and 21 February 1711.

enemy ship), all haste was required.⁶⁵ St John communicated his worries, and also his optimism, to Nicholson, saying that:

very many people guess the true intention of the preparations...the dispatching you away, give but too good grounds for busy and inquisitive people to dive into the secret...we shall find [a] way of beating them off from the true scent... [by] making them believe that the arms, stores and sergeants sent with you, are the whole assistance designed this year for North America, and that consequently the second embarkation is destined to another part.⁶⁶

This was logical enough, but if this was the case, then hiding their destination to the escorting frigate captains was unnecessary.

However, the *Leopard* lacked sufficient quantities of victuals as no bread or pork was available, so stores were scavenged from the holds of other ships.⁶⁷ As late as March, the *Sapphire* had sprung a leak sailing from the Downs⁶⁸ and St John hastily alerted Burchett to transfer its stores to another frigate to accompany Nicholson as soon as was possible.⁶⁹ After harassing the Admiralty, and debating whether to put the stores onto the *Mary Galley*, it was decided, upon the advice of Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Whitaker, that it would be quicker to repair the *Sapphire* despite predicting that this would take at least ten days.⁷⁰ It was now approaching mid-March and it was essential that Nicholson should sail immediately. Of course the delay with the *Sapphire* could not be helped, although St John was very agitated as it

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Instructions to Cockburn and Cook, 6 February 1711.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, St John to Nicholson, 5 March 1711.

⁶⁷ TNA, ADM 2/366/120, Admiralty to St John, 28 February 1711.

⁶⁸ TNA, ADM 1/4094/398, St John to Burchett, 10 March 1711; TNA, ADM 2/366/125, Admiralty to St John, 20 March 1711; Nicholson informed St John of the leak in a letter of 9 March 1711, TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Nicholson, 12 March 1711.

⁶⁹ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Burchett, 10 March 1711.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Hare to Burchett; St John to Nicholson, 12 March 1711; St John to Burchett, 13 March 1711.

became increasingly likely that Nicholson would not arrive in North America much before Walker. He wrongly predicted on 15 March that the main force would sail in only three weeks, whilst Nicholson was still awaiting his vessels at Portsmouth, though again St John reiterated his optimism regarding his security precautions, hoping that people would guess the destination of the main force as being France or Spain.⁷¹

St John later alerted the Admiralty to the possibility of the fitting out of a French squadron to recover Annapolis Royal and suggested they hasten Nicholson so he could assist in preventing such an attack.⁷² This was a convenient ploy by the Secretary of State to deceive the Admiralty about his intentions for Nicholson and to take control over their assets in North American waters, as St John also requested details of shipping in North America that could be used for its defence. He sent a letter to Nicholson on that very same day, but did not write about the danger to Annapolis Royal that he was so concerned about in his dealings with the Admiralty. Instead, St John told Nicholson that he should transfer some of Annapolis Royal's marines, mortars, stores and engineers from the fort so that they could be used on the expedition, and suggested they could be replaced by some colonial volunteers.⁷³ This was obviously not the likely preparation for an attack by a French squadron. The ploy was confirmed when St John later informed Walker 'under the pretence of Nicholson, and defending Port Royal, some of the Newfoundland ships will join you'.⁷⁴ On 10 April, the Admiralty placed the Newfoundland squadron under the orders of Nicholson and Dudley, for the 'defence' of Port Royal. This included the use of a

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, St John to Nicholson, 15 March 1711.

⁷² *Ibid.*, St John to Admiralty (third letter), 2 April 1711.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, St John to Nicholson, 2 April 1711.

⁷⁴ TNA, SP 42/68 and SP 44/213, St John to Walker, 17 April 1711.

possible sixteen extra ships over a period of one year.⁷⁵ Walker later received orders in June to this effect, enabling him to take command of any of the thirteen ships then located around North America that he might need.⁷⁶

Nicholson was clearly an integral part in organising the expedition, yet his own instructions for doing so were not issued until 21 February, under authority of his commission from the previous year to undertake the Port Royal expedition.⁷⁷

Harley's indisposition after his assassination attempt also impeded Nicholson as he was unable to receive payment of his bills.⁷⁸ Nicholson had been ready to leave on 16 March, but his sailing was hindered by the ongoing repairs to the *Sapphire*.⁷⁹

Although he eventually managed to leave Portsmouth, high westerly winds forced him into Plymouth.⁸⁰ Nicholson finally departed around 7 April after enduring weeks of bad weather.⁸¹ He had been so delayed that St John ordered him to procure canoes for the Montreal expedition when he arrived in New England, rather than take the time to build them.⁸² St John had hoped that Nicholson would have already arrived in America before Nicholson's departure. Many weeks had been wasted and the mobilisation of the colonies would be frantic. A long delay at Boston was already inevitable. The prospects for the expedition were not promising.

⁷⁵ TNA, SP 44/213, Admiralty to St John, 16 April 1711.

⁷⁶ TNA, ADM 2/43, Admiralty to Crow (commodore on the *Warspight*), 12 June 1711; TNA, ADM 2/43, St John via Admiralty to Walker, delivered by the *Adventure*, 16 June 1711. The ships were: at or near New York – the *Lowestoft* (32), *Feversham* (36), *Hector* (42) and *Shoreham* (32); at Virginia – the *Enterprize* (40) and *Tritons Prize* (30); at New England – the *Chester* (54); the Newfoundland squadron – the *Warspight* (66), *Warwick* (46), *Arundel* (32), *Milford* (44), *Portsmouth* (bomb) and *Seaford* (24). (See Merriman, R. D., (ed.), 'Queen Anne's Navy: Documents Concerning the Administration of the Navy of Queen Anne, 1702-1714', *Navy Records Society*, vol. CIII, (1961) and Winfield, R., *British Warships in the Age of Sail, 1603-1714*, (Barnsley, 2009) for guns); TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Walker, 17 April 1711.

⁷⁷ TNA, SP 44/213, Instructions to Nicholson, 21 February 1711.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, St John to Nicholson, 15 March 1711.

⁷⁹ It was thought that the *Sapphire* would be ready on 17 March. TNA, SP 42/68, Nicholson to St John, 16 March 1711.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Nicholson to St John, 4 April 1711.

⁸¹ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Nicholson, 7 April 1711.

⁸² *Ibid.*, St John to Nicholson, 9 April 1711.

IV: Promotions

The matrosses taken from foot regiments stationed in Britain were not the only soldiers to be given an incentive to join the expedition. Nicholson's convoy carried another important cargo: 'thirty men'. These soldiers were even more lavishly rewarded for their services to the expedition. Due to St John's obsessive and vain desire to keep the whole expedition secret, he had to decide, with little specific advice, what the force should consist of. He had an obvious desire for a successful outcome and therefore St John wanted the very best. Of course, in an age of patronage, General Hill was appointed for the expedition to proceed with the Queen's authority and other officers were sympathetic to the Tories. Nevertheless, St John identified the need for competency for it to succeed, even if he was overly hasty and secretive in his planning. That is why he demanded five veteran regiments from Flanders to embark upon the expedition and was unconcerned if it served to weaken Marlborough's army.

The Royal Navy was already largely meritocratic. The ability to sail a vastly expensive, state-owned vessel required skill and talent that was not necessarily prevalent amongst the upper echelons of society in the required quantity.⁸³ Conversely, in the British Army an officer's rank depended on how much money he was willing to pay for it, for promotion was based on a system of purchase. As regiments were mostly the property of their respective colonels, then the state risked less in losing a regiment of despised soldiers, as opposed to a ship that represented the fine 'wooden walls' of England. The Army provided rich young men with

⁸³ Merriman, 'Queen Anne's Navy', pp. 310-316.

opportunity and advancement, as ability and talent were not necessary prerequisites for obtaining the Queen's commission.

This is what makes the Quebec expedition so unique. Although it was unfortunate that it was not able to prove itself, the force sent was surprisingly capable, in part due to a specific request made by St John. He knew that at a distant 3,000 miles from home, Quebec would prove to be an unpopular posting for many officers who had heard about the harsh climate and living conditions; of Indians, who gloried in bloodthirsty scalping; and of penetrating winters and fearsome diseases. Postings to the West Indies, and even to the Iberian Peninsula, often saw many absentee officers remain at home. St John suspected that a 'secret expedition' would likewise deter many officers when they were unaware of where they would end up. This fear was illustrated by St John's desire, already described, to recruit Captain de Bauff, the talented engineer who was offered great rewards if he were to sail with the expedition. Through St John's instigation, the Earl of Orrery's harassment of de Bauff caused him to eventually decline the appointment. St John later rebuked Orrery: 'I wish your lordship did not frighten him by naming the West Indies to him'.⁸⁴ North America was tainted by the reputation of the West Indies as Europeans generally regarded the two as one geographical area.⁸⁵ It represented an unpopular posting to many land officers who, given the choice, would opt to remain in Europe and face the dangers of warfare there, rather than serve in an alien, uncivilised and disease-ridden environment.

Already many officers were absent from their regiments in the field, especially as many were also members of Parliament, or simply rich and enjoying the profits that

⁸⁴ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Orrery, 27 March 1711.

⁸⁵ Morgan, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711', p. 3; Waller, G. M., *Samuel Vetch, Colonial Enterpriser*, (Chapel Hill (North Carolina), 1960), p. 208.

a regiment presented in government contracts.⁸⁶ In order to ensure that he had experience on his side, St John, in what was almost certainly an unprecedented move, promoted thirty men from the ranks at a stroke. All had been sergeants and were promoted to lieutenant, albeit on ensign's pay. Secrecy prevailed in these promotions as their purpose was stated as being for 'a particular service abroad' and the reason for their commissions was simply explained 'for their encouragement'.⁸⁷

Promotion from the ranks had previously occurred in the New Model Army for bravery. This practise ceased upon the Restoration and was unknown until the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession, because of the unprecedented commitment of manpower to a European conflict.⁸⁸ To commission a sergeant in the field to urgently fill a vacancy may have been relatively common during the eighteenth century, but to promote thirty men at the same time was quite unusual.⁸⁹ To put this in perspective, during the nine years of the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748), 200 sergeants became officers and perhaps as many again were promoted during the Seven Years War.⁹⁰ Although such promotions were fairly common during wartime, and certainly rare during peacetime, it was generally utilised in the necessary and essential task of filling vacancies that were created through combat and disease.⁹¹ Whilst the Spanish Succession War was no exception, the fact that thirty were promoted in one instance, to serve together on a particular task, was certainly unique. Indeed, during the Seven Years War there may have been four non-

⁸⁶ Holmes, Geoffrey, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, (second edition, London, 1987), pp. 126-129.

⁸⁷ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Commissioners of Transports, 29 January 1711.

⁸⁸ Horse guard troopers, who already held the power to sell their positions, were commissioned in 1702 to provide a pool of officers in what was then a small officer corps, Bruce, A., *The Purchase System in the British Army, 1660-1871*, Royal Historical Society, Series no. 20, (London, 1980), pp. 14, 74.

⁸⁹ Scouller, *The Armies of Queen Anne*, p. 69.

⁹⁰ Houlding, J. A., *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715-1795*, (Oxford, 1981), p. 105.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

commissioned officers at most who had been simultaneously commissioned into any one regiment.⁹² During the wars of the mid-century, many regiments had a small number of ex-sergeant subalterns, but they were generally appointed on an individual basis and were much valued for their wealth of experience, along with their familiarity with discipline and training. These ex-sergeants were typically older in years and would have given at least fifteen years of service before rising to the officer class.⁹³

Thirty was a significant number as that was enough to furnish three regiments of foot with their lieutenants, as a regiment generally had around ten to twelve companies, each having one lieutenant and one ensign. At the peak of the war there were only seventy-two foot regiments, illustrating the relative scale of this measure.⁹⁴ It was even more remarkable when it is considered that most of these regiments would not have been at full strength. This mass promotion was an exceptional occurrence when compared to later wars, when there were perhaps three rankers on average in a regiment and six in an exceptional one, all of whom were only promoted when there was a vacancy that could not be filled by the purchase system.⁹⁵ The thirty therefore represent just over four per cent of the established figure for foot lieutenants. Of course, they were a special case and did not go on to serve with a regular established regiment. Instead, they were specially selected to join the expedition and were more akin to an expert, hand-picked group to serve on one of the first special operations of the eighteenth century.

⁹² Holmes, Richard, *Redcoat: The British Soldier in the Age of Horse and Musket*, (London, 2001), p. 166.

⁹³ Houlding, *Fit for Service*, p. 105.

⁹⁴ Scouller, *The Armies of Queen Anne*, p. 97.

⁹⁵ Houlding, *Fit for Service*, p. 105.

St John originally enquired about these sergeants on 5 January, with the War Office and from ‘officers [who] will give a good recommendation’.⁹⁶ In response, thirty commanding officers gave recommendations for thirty-seven sergeants.⁹⁷ They were put on the establishment from 1 January (despite Nicholson not sailing until April, although it was assumed that his departure was imminent) to 22 December 1711 on ensigns’ pay.⁹⁸ That is one shilling a day less than a lieutenant would receive, effectively making them brevet lieutenants under the British establishment. Nevertheless, their ensigns’ pay was double that to which they were accustomed as sergeants.⁹⁹ However, they were not entirely neglected in this respect as the remainder of their full lieutenant’s pay was to be paid by the colonies.¹⁰⁰ Such a significant rise in pay may have been an attractive proposition for a veteran sergeant of the Flanders theatre. When the sergeants were added to the establishment list they were described as ‘thirty sergeants of our army whose experience in military affairs hath inclined us to employ them in our service on the foot of ensigns pay’.¹⁰¹ Although this warrant was made and the sergeants put on the establishment, given their covert nature Parliament did not have the opportunity to approve it.¹⁰²

St John delegated the appointment of the sergeants to Secretary at War George Granville.¹⁰³ The names of the initial thirty, a task given to Lieutenant-General Erle

⁹⁶ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Granville, 5 January 1711.

⁹⁷ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Cardonnel, 23 January 1711.

⁹⁸ A cost of £1602 (or £53 8s each which equates to the normal 3s a day paid to an ensign, Scouller, *The Armies of Queen Anne*, Appendix G), TNA, WO 24/75 ‘An account of some extraordinary charges of war’. TNA, SP 41/4/208, ‘An account of some extraordinary charges of war’, listed the cost as £1642 10s, along with £4021 1s 8d for officers sent to Nicholson in 1710, for the year 1712.

⁹⁹ Sergeants received 1s 6d per day. Scouller, *The Armies of Queen Anne*, Appendix G.

¹⁰⁰ TNA, SP 44/213, Instructions to Hunter, no. 2, 6 February 1711; also in Graham, ‘The Walker Expedition to Quebec’, p. 272.

¹⁰¹ TNA, WO 24/75, Establishment of the lieutenants, 12 January 1711.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* and SP 41/4/208, ‘An account of some extraordinary charges of war’.

¹⁰³ TNA, SP 41/3/216, Granville to St John, 11 January 1711.

of the Ordnance,¹⁰⁴ were drawn up by late January.¹⁰⁵ St John ordered two months' pay to be withdrawn from the Treasury and to embark the newly promoted lieutenants on the two transports, along with the supplies for the colonies.¹⁰⁶ The lieutenants, many of whom were in Flanders, were quickly assembled and were expected to embark on 1 February, but their transports were delayed. These vessels could not escape the Nore (the mouth of the Thames) during the first week of February as they had been beaten back by contrary winds.¹⁰⁷ St John became very agitated as he expected the lieutenants to have arrived at Portsmouth by mid-February, but had instead heard nothing of their progress. The fact that St John wrote at least nine letters on this subject, in such a short space of time, is indicative of the importance placed by him on the need to have these men, along with Nicholson and the arms, sent to the colonies.¹⁰⁸

One of the transports allocated did not meet with expectations. The lieutenants on the *Neptune* complained of the lack of 'conveniences' on board, compared with the *Joseph*. A further delay was encountered in early February when the transports were waiting to depart as three lieutenants had yet to embark.¹⁰⁹ It transpired that two of them declined to serve, although after taking their commissions and their advance money – the two months' pay withdrawn from the Treasury.

¹⁰⁴ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Erle and St John, 26 and 29 January 1711.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Granville to Lowndes (Treasury), 29 January 1711. Four names differ in St John's list in his letterbook, TNA, SP 44/213. Some of the men may have been unavailable.

¹⁰⁶ SP 41/3/226, St John to Granville, 29 January 1711. Granville requested three months' pay to be advanced, TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Brydges, 26 January 1711.

¹⁰⁷ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Commissioners of Transports, 31 January 1711; Granville to Lieutenant-Generals Erle and Withers, 2 February 1711; Samuel Lynne to Tilson, 7 February 1711.

¹⁰⁸ TNA, SP 44/213.

¹⁰⁹ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Commissioners of Transports, 8 February 1711.

Replacements were immediately sought.¹¹⁰ Despite vast increases in pay and authority, they were probably wary as to the intentions of their masters, or felt uncomfortable crossing the huge social divide that would have separated them from their comrades. Both came well recommended. The first sergeant, John Parrot, was suggested by Lieutenant-General Farrington, and Sergeant John Mackullough was proposed by Colonel Pocock. For the remaining twenty-eight, such an attractive proposition probably compelled them to serve.

Often during the army's history many rankers asked to be returned to the ranks because of the prejudicial nature of the purchase system and the lack of acceptance due to the prevalence of class distinctions.¹¹¹ Fortunately, this probably would not have been the case in 1711, owing to the promotions occurring on such a large scale and without the arrogant officer-class mentality taking root in the colonies. Indeed, there were soon replacements for Sergeants Parrot and Mackulloch, as an Alexander Balackhal and Andrew Nickel filled their places almost immediately. The Earl of Orkney and Lord Hartford had sent for them from Flanders. One letter referred to Blackhal and Nickel as 'the two new lieutenants', whilst their predecessors were simply called 'the other two'. Parrot and Mackullough's old colonels had been 'acquainted...with Her Majesties pleasure concerning them', perhaps indicating that the Secretary at War was not pleased by their refusals.¹¹² They were most likely sent back to their respective regiments as Granville had written on the same day to their colonels to say that the Queen 'expects that the money, which was advanced to [them]

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Granville to St John, 15 February 1711. The third sergeant, William Wilkinson was sent on the expedition, Library and Archives of Canada (hereafter cited as LAC), MG40-Q11, 'The thirty lieutenants sent to New York...'

¹¹¹ Holmes, *Redcoat*, pp. 171-172.

¹¹² TNA, SP 41/3/237, Granville to St John, 15 February 1711.

be forthwith repaid into the Pay office and that the [men] should be produced'.¹¹³

This was transmitted by St John to Granville, who also mentioned that Blackhall and Nickel had received their commissions on that afternoon and were ready to set out for Portsmouth.¹¹⁴ The two new lieutenants were ready on 10 March to embark at Portsmouth, however, Nicholson's convoy was ordered to St Helens instead. The escorting *Leopard* frigate was tasked to transfer them.¹¹⁵ Thomas Cook from the 1st Foot Guards was excused from service as he had to give evidence for a military case before the House of Commons.¹¹⁶ St John, before knowing the facts, initially wanted him convicted as a deserter.¹¹⁷ He was replaced, as were three others for reasons unknown.¹¹⁸

The final thirty new lieutenants eventually sailed across the Atlantic with Nicholson. No other British regulars for the expedition were posted at their destination in New York and they were clearly not intended to accompany any of the regiments to Quebec. Instead, they were to be attached to the overland expedition to Montreal and provide the colonials with their military discipline, experience and leadership. If the expedition had continued as planned, then perhaps this would have been the perfect marriage between the resilient colonials, who knew the country and did not possess the old world bigotry of the English officer class, and the new lieutenants, who had many years experience of warfare and proven combat skills without the arrogance of a privileged social background. As this was their mission, it can be seen why many established officers would not be keen on such employment,

¹¹³ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Farrington and Pocock, 17 February 1711.

¹¹⁴ TNA, SP 41/213, St John to Granville, 17 February 1711.

¹¹⁵ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Burchett, 10 March 1711.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Granville to Withers, 10 March 1711.

¹¹⁷ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Granville, 2 March 1711.

¹¹⁸ Lists of the names of the lieutenants differ between those that were planned to be sent and those that were actually at New York: TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Lowndes, 29 January 1711 and LAC, MG40-Q11, 'The thirty lieutenants sent to New York...'

having to march with provincials and Indians over hundreds of miles of wilderness and difficult terrain, through disease-infested swamp and marshlands. The lieutenants' purpose was confirmed in the official instructions to Governor Robert Hunter of New York, which Nicholson was entrusted with delivering. With respect to the second article of these orders, concerning the raising of 2,000 colonial militiamen for the Montreal expedition, it stated that the thirty lieutenants were to be placed in this 'corps'.¹¹⁹ Drawing pay from both Britain and New York must have caused considerable confusion.¹²⁰ Hunter's precise instructions are further evidence of the extent to which St John had control over the expedition, despite not accompanying it.

The lieutenants, the stores from Blake and the Ordnance, and the governors' orders eventually arrived at New York in compliance with Nicholson's orders.¹²¹ Again, the Victualling Board was asked to supply the lieutenants with only three months' provisions.¹²² This was of little consequence as that quantity of supplies would be sufficient to cross the Atlantic (however, St John initially asked for only two months' provisions which would have left little contingency in an emergency)¹²³ and it was no secret that Nicholson was heading for America, especially as he now had official cover in the form of defending Annapolis Royal.

What eventually happened to most of these rankers is unknown. What is certain is that twenty-eight of the thirty were still at New York in December 1712, fourteen months after their comrades in Walker's fleet had returned to England. As for the missing two, Lieutenant Selwyn was paid until October 1711, whilst

¹¹⁹ TNA, SP 44/213, Instructions to Hunter, no. 2, 6 February 1711; also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 272.

¹²⁰ Lieutenant Corbet was paid from a different date to the rest. LAC, MG40-Q11, 'State of the account of the thirty sergeants sent to New York in 1711'.

¹²¹ TNA, SP 44/213, Instructions to Nicholson, 21 February 1711.

¹²² *Ibid.*, St John to Admiralty, 16 January 1711.

¹²³ TNA, ADM 1/4094; SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty, 4 January 1711.

Lieutenant Corbet continued to draw pay until April 1712, with disease or desertion being the most likely culprits for their disappearance. There are documents claiming that the lieutenants had been paid too much at New York and so the difference came out of their half-pay, which most of them were drawing in 1713. Governor Hunter sent a letter as late as June 1715 concerning problems with bills associated with them.¹²⁴ He mentioned that some money had been paid directly to their wives in England instead. These problems must undoubtedly have arisen from the confusing situation of drawing pay from two treasuries 3,000 miles apart. At least four of the lieutenants were leading independent companies in the colonies well after the war had ended. One had even managed to further his career, as Martin Groundman became a captain in a marine regiment and was later governor of Cowes Castle on the Isle of Wight.¹²⁵ The details of the conclusion of this episode are for the most part sketchy, however, as all trace of the majority of these lieutenants disappears from the historical record. One wonders if Sergeants Parrot and Mackulloch were actually more contented by refusing to serve as officers in the colonies, considering most of their colleagues may have been abandoned overseas.

The expedition nevertheless served to demonstrate that social mobility within the early British Army was more fluid than is widely imagined. St John, as the primary military coordinator, identified the need for experience and competence that could not be willingly provided by incumbent officers in sufficient numbers, in what was considered an unpopular posting. The promotion of sergeants would continue despite the purchase system. However, most of these new officers could not hope for

¹²⁴ LAC, MG40-Q11, 'The 30 lieutenants sent to New York...'; Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, VI, pp. 291-292.

¹²⁵ Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, VI, pp. 291-292.

further promotion because of their social background.¹²⁶ Unfortunately, the thirty lieutenants mobilised for the attack on Montreal were unable to prove their worth in combat. Nevertheless, a precedent had been set that would see future regiments benefit from the practical value that many of these rankers could offer.

V: The Foot Regiments

Despite St John's urgency, the various regiments destined for the Americas were not assembled until April 1711. Secretary at War Granville had been delegated the task of tackling the minutiae of detail associated with assembling the regular regiments assigned to make up the bulk of the land forces under Hill. Communications, it must be remembered, were as fast as a letter could be delivered – it could take up to two days in London to receive a reply from Portsmouth, but when contacting the continent the formidable barriers of the English Channel and the North Sea meant that it would take at least a week to receive a response. Catering for such logistics was therefore a difficult task, especially as the regiments were not all together in one place. Three were stationed at disparate locations around Britain. These were Disney's, Kirk's and Seymour's regiments. A further five were located in Flanders – part of Marlborough's army for his final campaign.

Marlborough was powerless to prevent their use. Only occasionally was he informed of the proceedings at the War Office with respect to the requisitioning of these regiments.¹²⁷ It can only have been frustrating for Marlborough to be deprived of a sizeable element of his force, especially as they were withdrawn from the continent as late as April, just as his own operations were commencing. St John's lax

¹²⁶ Burton, I. F. and Newman, A. N., 'Sir John Cope: Promotion in the Eighteenth-Century Army', *The English Historical Review*, vol. LXXVIII, no. 309, (October, 1963), p. 667.

¹²⁷ TNA, WO 4/12, Granville to Marlborough, 6 April 1711.

organisation had not even managed to collect the English-based regiments at the Portsmouth rendezvous by this time. Even though he had requested a summary of regimental strengths in the final days of 1710, in order to recruit sufficient numbers to make up the battalions, these months were seemingly wasted.¹²⁸

A great deal of effort was needed to assemble the regiments and load them on transports with their provisions. Those in England had to march from all parts of the country. Whilst Seymour's regiment had a relatively short march from Plymouth to Portsmouth, Kirk's and Disney's faced a much longer journey, marching from the far north of the country to the Thames to be transported onwards by sea. Kirk's had received orders in January to march 'out of the north southwards'.¹²⁹ On 3 March it was at Leicester when Kirk was ordered to proceed with haste to Ware, before receiving further orders to head for Tilbury fort where the regiment would embark on transports.¹³⁰ Both Seymour's and Kirk's required advanced subsistence money to accomplish their marches pursuant to their orders.¹³¹

Six companies of Seymour's regiment were still on the march in mid-February,¹³² two of which were then ordered onwards to the Isle of Wight¹³³ to perform various garrison duties before embarking on the transports.¹³⁴ There was no rush to load these troops, as it would take several weeks before the other regiments, along with sufficient stores, rendezvoused at Portsmouth for embarkation. Furthermore, the health and morale of embarked soldiers soon dissipates and would often be accompanied by outbreaks of sickness. Boarding was therefore often

¹²⁸ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Granville, 23 December 1710.

¹²⁹ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Lowndes, 26 January 1711.

¹³⁰ TNA, SP 41/3/252 and WO 4/10, Granville to St John, 3 March 1711; TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Governor at Tilbury fort, 18 March 1711.

¹³¹ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Lowndes, 26 January 1711.

¹³² *Ibid.*, Granville to Governor of Portsmouth, 15 February 1711.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, Granville to Governor of Portsmouth, 27 February 1711.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, Granville to Lieutenant-General Webb, 27 February 1711.

conducted as late as possible.¹³⁵ Meanwhile, new recruits for some regiments were ordered into the barracks at the Tower of London, rather than being quartered aboard the waiting transports.¹³⁶ It was likely they were being prepared to go to Quebec as Granville 'detained' a hospital ship on the Thames until it took on some new recruits and other stores, before it set sail for Portsmouth.¹³⁷

Hill's, Clayton's, Kane's, Kirk's and Seymour's were identified for service on the expedition fairly early, or at least before Grant's, Windress' and Disney's. On 10 March, Hill's, Clayton's and Kane's were mentioned in the War Office records because the commanders wanted forage and wagon money owed to them, which would be paid upon their return to England. This letter stated that they were intended to be employed on 'service elsewhere'. However, as Granville's letter also stated that these regiments were due to serve 'in company with two more [regiments] to be brought from Flanders', implies, as was the case, that another two regiments had not been identified by this time.¹³⁸ St John's letter to Marlborough three days later indicated the Queen's 'desire...that two other battalions might be ordered, whose colonels had not so high a rank as Mr Hill, of which there are several in your Grace's army'. Brigadiers Hamilton and Sutton were colonels of the other two regiments mischievously allocated by Marlborough to join the expedition. St John took matters into his own hands and forcefully informed Marlborough in a letter of 13 March that, besides Hill's, Clayton's and Kane's, the regiments of Grant and Windress were to be

¹³⁵ Scouller, *The Armies of Queen Anne*, pp.214-215.

¹³⁶ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Earl Rivers, 6 March 1711.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, Granville to Commissioners of Transports, 9 March 1711.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, Granville to Brydges, 10 March 1711.

quickly made ready for the expedition.¹³⁹ As these last two regiments had been identified, they were told to abandon their horses and return to England, whilst financial measures were taken to cater for their service under Hill.¹⁴⁰

Some of the expeditionary colonels were asked for an account of their absentee officers and when they could be expected to return to duty – ironically, Windress was already absent from his regiment which was in Flanders.¹⁴¹ A list was drawn up concerning them and sent to St John.¹⁴² Owing to slow communications, it was as late as 23 March that Kane arrived at The Hague with the order for the final regiments to be sent to England. Marlborough had no option but to send Kane to Ghent to stop the march of various detachments of English regiments who were to garrison there, so that they could be speedily dispatched to Ostend for embarkation. Although he did not know which regiments would be taken, elements of Hill's, Clayton's, Kane's and Grant's regiments were included in this detachment.¹⁴³ Marlborough, left with a weakened garrison at Ghent, had not been privy to all of the details and discovered as late as 31 March, when St John's letter of the 13th arrived, which regiments he would lose. It is evident he did not expect to lose Windress' and ordered for the regiment's detachments to amalgamate and march for Ostend with all haste.¹⁴⁴ French intelligence was quite aware of the withdrawal of these regiments.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁹ Parke, Gilbert, *Letters and Correspondence, Public and Private, of the Right Honourable Henry St John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke; During the Time He was Secretary of State to Queen Anne...*, (London, 1798), I, pp. 94-97, St John to Marlborough, 13 March 1711.

¹⁴⁰ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Granville, 13 March 1711; TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Windress and Grant; Granville to Brydges, 14 March 1711.

¹⁴¹ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Kirk, Seymour, Hill, Clayton, Disney and Kane, 14 March 1711; Parke, *Letters and Correspondence*, I, p. 97, St John to Marlborough, 13 March 1711.

¹⁴² TNA, SP 41/3/270 and WO 4/10, Granville to St John, 25 March 1711. Unfortunately, the list is no longer attached to the letter in question, nor was it copied into Granville's letterbook.

¹⁴³ Murray, George, (ed.), *The Letters and Dispatches of John Churchill, First Duke of Marlborough, from 1702 to 1712*, (London, 1845), V, p. 278, Marlborough to Earl of Albermarle, 24 March 1711.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 292, Marlborough to Albermarle, 1 April 1711.

¹⁴⁵ Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 18.

In fact, much of the population of Britain also knew of their movements as, extraordinarily, these regiments were reported in the *British Mercury* as being intended for a 'secret expedition'.¹⁴⁶ There was only so much St John could do to hide their true purpose.

St John had passed on detailed instructions to Granville concerning how the force should be assembled, including what regiments were required; where they would embark; where their stores would be collated; the duties of Colonel Clayton to ensure that the transports were suitable; the embarkation of the stores and regiments on the Thames; Colonel Kane's role of overseeing the embarkation of the Flanders' regiments; and Colonel King's appointment, being responsible for all matters pertaining to the artillery.¹⁴⁷ Kirk's regiment was at Tilbury upon the Thames as late as 18 March. However, their distance from the rendezvous was insignificant compared to the companies of Disney's, whose march had originated in Berwick-upon-Tweed and were that night camped near York. They were ordered to march with all haste.¹⁴⁸ Kirk's troops at Tilbury fort were then mustered before being embarked¹⁴⁹ whilst recruits for the regiments remained lodged at the Tower.¹⁵⁰ Legal issues had begun to cloud the preparations at this time, when Kempenfelt, commanding Seymour's, alerted Granville that some of his soldiers refused service abroad as they had completed their three years voluntary service in accordance with the law.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ *British Mercury*, 28-30 March 1711, issue 159.

¹⁴⁷ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Granville, 13 March 1711.

¹⁴⁸ TNA, SP 41/3/266 and WO 4/10, Granville to St John, 18 March 1711.

¹⁴⁹ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Commissary General, 19 March 1711.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Granville to Earl Rivers, 19 March 1711.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Granville to Attorney General, 17 March 1711. Scouller, *The Armies of Queen Anne*, pp. 113, 115-117.

As Disney's, Kirk's and Seymour's were already on the march in Britain, it remained for the other five regiments in Flanders to begin to be organised. They had been ordered to dispose of their horses and stores in mid-March.¹⁵² Granville consulted with Coleby about the readiness of transports for '4,200 men, 300 men and 800 men'.¹⁵³ The 4,200 men in question were the five regiments in Flanders, plus Kirk's at Tilbury, the 300 were the new recruits at the Tower, and the 800 were Disney's regiment still in the north.¹⁵⁴ Seymour's was not a worry as they did not require transport for their march from Plymouth. Granville also began to process the pay and subsistence of these eight regiments.¹⁵⁵

Clayton had met with Granville and Coleby whilst in London where they discussed how to transport the Flanders regiments to Portsmouth.¹⁵⁶ These five regiments would assemble at Ostend in transports able to carry 3,500 men. Transports sufficient to carry 4,200 men were already lying in the Hope (in the Thames Estuary). To save time, it was determined that after embarking Kirk's regiment at Tilbury, they would sail to Ostend to pick up the Flanders regiments, under naval convoy. The 300 recruits,¹⁵⁷ along with the transports for the '800 men', would await Disney's arrival on the Thames. Coleby was wary about the state of provisions in several of the ships, however. It was agreed that all of the transports would rendezvous at Spithead, where Seymour's could then embark, having already arrived at Portsmouth. Granville's orders to the Commissioners of Transports were issued after the meeting, stating that Kane would direct the embarkation at Ostend, and Clayton likewise at Tilbury fort, as

¹⁵² TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Granville, 13 March 1711.

¹⁵³ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Coleby, 14 March 1711.

¹⁵⁴ TNA, SP 41/3/261, Granville to St John, 15 March 1711 and WO 4/10, 19 March 1711[letterbook dating error?].

¹⁵⁵ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Lowndes, 14 March 1711.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Granville to St John, 19 March 1711.

¹⁵⁷ TNA, ADM 111/9, undated account of victualling transports.

stipulated in St John's instructions.¹⁵⁸ Granville desired nothing financial should be wanting for the regiments, communicating this to the paymasters, Howe and Brydges, who were responsible for the regiments based in England and Flanders respectively.¹⁵⁹

The potential effectiveness of the expedition slowly waned with the progression of time. On 27 March the transports were still awaiting Disney's regiment and some clothing.¹⁶⁰ On the same day, Hill was put on the pay of a commander in chief,¹⁶¹ and the recruits in the Tower embarked for Portsmouth, along with supplies, under the direction of Clayton.¹⁶² It was obvious by this point that it would be late April at the earliest before the fleet could reasonably be expected to sail. The Commissioners of Transports informed Granville that the transports set to take Disney to Portsmouth still required victualling, which would take place 'Friday [30 March] or Saturday [31] the soonest'. Once this was completed, they then had to sail to pick up the regiment and onto Portsmouth; whilst on 26 March the Ostend transports had yet to leave England.¹⁶³

After the petitions made by Granville for the advanced pay of the regiments, the Treasury had yet to acquiesce to these demands to honour the payments. St John was aware of the 'indispensable necessity' of ensuring that this was done, but then increased the sum asked for by £5,000-6,000 in specie to be placed aboard the fleet, as 'this has always been done when expeditions of this kind are ordered'.¹⁶⁴ This sum

¹⁵⁸ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Commissioners of Transport, 19 March 1711.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Granville to Howe and Brydges, 23 March 1711.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Granville to Commissioners of Transports, 27 March 1711; TNA, SP41/3/272, Lynne to Hare, 27 March 1711.

¹⁶¹ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Lowndes, 26 March 1711.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, Granville to Clayton, 26 March 1711.

¹⁶³ TNA, SP 41/3/272, Commissioners of Transports to Granville, 27 March 1711.

¹⁶⁴ TNA, SP 41/3/275, St John to Granville, 3 April 1711; TNA, SP 44/111 and SP 44/213, St John to Granville, 5 April 1711.

would be needed to procure further supplies at Boston. Granville forwarded this to the Treasury, adding the suggestion that a paymaster should be sent along with the expedition, a position which had not been included upon the expedition's establishment.¹⁶⁵ Such an omission was a glaring failure on behalf of St John. He continually pressed for the pay of these regiments to be arranged and had intended for this to have been resolved during the previous month of February.¹⁶⁶ The lack of an appointed paymaster provides an example of the oversights caused by his organisation and the hasty manner in which these problems were supposedly solved. In contrast, a paymaster was appointed to the train of artillery in January.¹⁶⁷ The position of deputy paymaster was to be appointed by Hill himself.¹⁶⁸ Hill and his staff officers had also requested a three months' advance on their pay, 'to equip themselves for their voyage...as has been usual in the like cases'.¹⁶⁹ Offering the example of precedents as justification for requesting money may have caused much speculation about the expedition's destination amongst the British establishment.

In any case, such was the rush to send the expedition on its way, that the debts held by Kirk's regiment were asked to be deferred. The regiment had accumulated debts to the Ordnance for arms drawn whilst it was in Spain.¹⁷⁰ Likewise, Disney's regiment held debts in similar circumstances due to the need to raise a new regiment after their losses at the battle of Almansa.¹⁷¹ Kirk's and Kane's regiments were similarly affected by the procrastinating Treasury, as the subsistence pay of some of

¹⁶⁵ TNA, WO 4/12, Granville to Lowndes (similar letters sent to Howe and Brydges), 5 April 1711.

¹⁶⁶ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Lowndes, 14 March 1711.

¹⁶⁷ TNA, SP 41/34, Ordnance to Marlborough, 20 January 1711; Ordnance to Commissary Hawys, 1 March 1711.

¹⁶⁸ TNA, WO 4/12, Granville to Hill, 9 April 1711; Granville to Lowndes, 13 April 1711.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Granville to Brydges, 11 April 1711.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Granville to Howe, 12 April 1711.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Granville to Brydges, 14 April 1711.

their soldiers was still owing due to some having been prisoners in France.¹⁷² This was despite St John's promise to Marlborough a month earlier that, 'they [the regiments] shall not fail to have their subsistence advanced to them'.¹⁷³ However, it does appear that St John had only informed the Treasury almost three weeks later that advances were needed.¹⁷⁴

Escorts for all of the transports were sent to the Downs on 1 March, ready to convoy them to their respective destinations.¹⁷⁵ Some of the warships had only been detailed to escort the transports to Spithead on 21 March.¹⁷⁶ The Ostend escorts also received orders to convoy the remaining transports on this date.¹⁷⁷ A few days later, some transports still had not sailed from the Thames, as stores had not yet arrived.¹⁷⁸ On 31 March, St John could wait no longer and ordered these transports to take on Disney's regiment, where they were waiting further down the Thames at the Nore.¹⁷⁹ Money, despite lacking proper authorisation by Parliament, did not seem to be an important obstacle for St John. It was determined that those clothing stores that Disney's transports were awaiting would instead be sent by 'land-carriage' to Portsmouth.¹⁸⁰ Both convoys were delayed by contrary winds, but those sailing for

¹⁷² TNA, SP 42/68, Hill to St John, 22 April 1711; TNA, WO 4/12, Granville to Brydges, 25 April 1711.

¹⁷³ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Marlborough, 5 March 1711.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, St John to Treasury, 24 March 1711.

¹⁷⁵ TNA, ADM 2/43, Admiralty to Sir William Jumper (Commissioner of Chatham), 1 March 1711.

¹⁷⁶ The *Edgar* (70), *Dunkirk* (60), *Monmouth* (66), and *Torbay* (80), formed this squadron to escort 17 transports there. TNA, ADM 2/43, Admiralty to Moody (*Torbay*), 21 March 1711. (See Merriman, 'Queen Anne's Navy' and Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, for guns).

¹⁷⁷ The *Montague* and *Swiftsure* were to proceed to Ostend, TNA, ADM 2/43, Admiralty to Moody (*Torbay*), 21 March 1711; the *Sunderland*, *Kingston*, and *Milford* also went, TNA, ADM 51/614, *Montague* captain's log, 27 March 1711; TNA, ADM 111/9, Burchett, 26 March under heading for 27 March 1711.

¹⁷⁸ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty; St John to Commissioners of Transports, 26 March 1711.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, St John to Commissioners of Transports, 31 March 1711.

¹⁸⁰ Walker, 'Journal', pp. 91-92, 7 April 1711.

Ostend were further hampered by a lack of pilots.¹⁸¹ Whilst Portsmouth awaited the veterans from Flanders, some new recruits were assembling at the port to make up numbers in the regiments. Three sergeants and forty recruits for Windress' regiment were expected in early April to march into the Portsmouth garrison and await the transports.¹⁸²

The poor weather having abated and pilots acquired, the transports had finally arrived at Ostend on 31 March. They had sailed into harbour with the *Milford* frigate, the larger escorts anchoring outside the port.¹⁸³ When the five regiments had embarked under the supervision of Kane, the Colonel had been told by St John, in order to preserve the secret, that '[I] desire you to insinuate with an air of confidence, where you think the secret will least be kept, that this preparation is intended for the coast of south France'.¹⁸⁴ This would deceive the Dutch as much as the French, which would not pose a problem for St John considering his negative attitude towards them. This deception may have been to avert public dismay from the weakening of the army in Flanders.¹⁸⁵ It is, however, more likely that it was simply to cloak their true destination, as it was common knowledge that five regiments were being withdrawn – a fact that could not be hidden. Britain's Austrian and Dutch allies were angered when they found out about the expedition and they reportedly assumed it was to be sent against Peru.¹⁸⁶ The regiments had arrived at Ostend after the transports on 2 April, so their delay in sailing from England was not detrimental after all. The transports started loading the regiments on 4 April, departed the port of Ostend the

¹⁸¹ TNA, ADM 2/366/127, Admiralty to St John, 29 March 1711; TNA, ADM 2/366/128, Admiralty to Earl of Dorset (Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports), 4 April 1711.

¹⁸² Coincidentally this is exactly the same number needed to supply matrosses for the train; this may instead have been their true employment. TNA, WO 4/12, Granville to Sir John Gibson, 6 April 1711.

¹⁸³ TNA, ADM 51/614 and SP 42/68, Kane to St John, 4 April 1711.

¹⁸⁴ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Kane, 17 March 1711.

¹⁸⁵ Morgan, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711', p. 11.

¹⁸⁶ Swift, Jonathan, *The Conduct of the Allies...*, (second edition, London, 1711), p. 32.

next day and sailed for Spithead with their escorts on the 6th.¹⁸⁷ The Flanders regiments arrived at Portsmouth on 11 April and so, finally, progress was being made, although the regiments' presence was reported in the papers.¹⁸⁸

Seymour's, having been waiting in garrisons around the south coast since the end of February, was ordered to embark on the transports shortly after their arrival, as soon as Coleby declared them ready.¹⁸⁹ Although Seymour did not accompany them, his role of colonel of the regiment was still in effect whilst they remained in England. It was 14 April when all land officers, along with their naval comrades,¹⁹⁰ were to be present at Portsmouth, upon pain of being cashiered. St John even recommended to Granville that this order should be placed in the *Gazette* of the next day, and other measures taken so 'that no officer may have room to pretend ignorance of them'.¹⁹¹ The final transports from the Thames arrived at Portsmouth on 17 April.¹⁹²

Seymour's regiment finally embarked on 22 April, as Hill had to respond to St John's impatience by explaining that heavy winds had temporarily halted the boarding of Seymour's men. The procedure continued after a window of opportunity was offered when the winds abated.¹⁹³ Various weather conditions proved to be a great hindrance to the expedition and was, of course, one element not within St John's

¹⁸⁷ TNA, ADM 51/614 and SP 42/68, Kane to St John, 4 April 1711.

¹⁸⁸ TNA, ADM 51/614 and WO 4/12, Granville to Marlborough, 10 April 1711; TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Coleby, 11 April 1711; *The Post Man*, 12-14 April 1711, issue 1997. Additional escorts had been acquired as they were convoyed by the *Swiftsure* (66), *Montague* (64), *Sunderland* (60), *Kingston* (64), *Milford* (36) and *Squirrel* (24) (See Merriman, 'Queen Anne's Navy' and Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, for guns).

¹⁸⁹ TNA, WO 4/12, Granville to Seymour, 12 April 1711, Coleby appears to have only been informed of his responsibilities to Seymour's regiment in a letter of the 14th, *ibid.*, Granville to Coleby, 14 April 1711.

¹⁹⁰ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty, 11 April 1711.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, St John to Granville, 11 April 1711. No such notice in the *Gazette* has been found.

¹⁹² Extra warships were secured as the transports were escorted in by the *Devonshire* (80), *Torbay* (80), *Edgar* (70), *Monmouth* (66), *Dunkirk* (60), *Diamond* (42) and *Experiment* (32). *The British Mercury*, 18-20 April 1711, issue 168 (See Merriman, 'Queen Anne's Navy' and Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, for guns).

¹⁹³ TNA, SP 42/68, Hill to St John, 22 April 1711.

control. Seymour's troops, along with the marines, were the last element of the expedition to embark, the other regiments having sailed from the Nore and Ostend, and were already aboard transports. At least 500 marines had been requested for the expedition in March, 'the best that can be chosen'.¹⁹⁴ This number was later increased to 600, offered by Colonel Churchill, as there were more marines available than was originally supposed.¹⁹⁵ This figure represents only half of the planned total, however. In January, Dartmouth had notified the Admiralty that 1,200 marines above those already at sea would be needed within six weeks 'and must be kept secret'.¹⁹⁶ Final appointments were still being made in April as an adjutant and quartermaster had yet to be appointed to the marines.¹⁹⁷ St John made a final appointment on 24 April for a Mr Gordon to accompany the expedition as provost-marshal and stipulated that he should not 'suffer...in respect of his employment of provost-marshal of Barbados'.¹⁹⁸

Eight complete regiments of foot would not, however, form part of the expedition. The composition of Hill's force was clarified to the General in mid-April when he was told that the men of Grant's regiment were to be divided into the other regiments to make up numbers.¹⁹⁹ Disney's undermanned regiment was specifically identified to be augmented by this order, so that it would consist of thirteen companies of fifty-six men 'including servants'.²⁰⁰ There was thus a clear effort to send full-strength regiments to Quebec. With the majority of Grant's having escaped the arduous Atlantic voyage, its colonel may have regarded the fragmentation of his

¹⁹⁴ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty, 20 March 1711.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, St John to Admiralty, 27 March 1711.

¹⁹⁶ TNA, ADM 1/4094/296, Dartmouth to Admiralty, 13 January 1711.

¹⁹⁷ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty (second letter), 2 April 1711.

¹⁹⁸ TNA, SP 41/3/285 and SP 41/213, St John to Dartmouth, 24 April 1711.

¹⁹⁹ TNA, WO 4/12, Granville to Hill, 14 April 1711.

²⁰⁰ Servants were sometimes included in company strengths, Scouller, *The Armies of Queen Anne*, p.101.

regiment as a blessing, as his officers, both commissioned and non-commissioned, along with a number of reduced companies, were able to remain in Britain away from danger whether in Canada or Flanders. As a summer of recruiting instead lay ahead of them, orders were received from Granville for Grant to march to Reading.²⁰¹

Granville later ordered, in more insistent terms, that Grant should detach a captain, a lieutenant and an ensign to join Disney's regiment, which was so weak that its thirteenth company had been completely transferred from Grant's, exclusive of its officers. Hill had wanted this officer deficit rectified and informed Granville of these circumstances.²⁰² Other than those officers that had to be transferred later, the company transferred to Disney's consisted of three sergeants, three corporals, two drummers and fifty-six men, and six men from each of Grant's other twelve companies were to be distributed throughout the regiment.²⁰³ This would have been troubling for Grant, as the regiment was, of course, his property. It also exemplifies how poor the planning had actually been, despite St John asking for such details much earlier. The varying strengths of the regiments were unforeseen and this necessitated the breaking-up of Grant's in order to bring the other regiments, particularly Disney's, up to strength. Why Grant's was chosen is not known, but it can be inferred that it was possibly even weaker than Disney's.

In any case, Grant could not have led his regiment in Canada, for he was on parole, as was his lieutenant-colonel.²⁰⁴ Grant had sailed back to Britain in the autumn of 1710 to contest, successfully, a seat in Elginshire at the general election. On this voyage he had been captured by a privateer and, as an officer, was released on

²⁰¹ TNA, WO 4/12, Granville to Grant, 21 April 1711.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, Granville to Hill, 21 April 1711.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, Granville to Commissary General, 16 May 1711.

²⁰⁴ Parke, *Letters and Correspondence*, I, St John to Marlborough, 13 March 1711, p. 97.

parole – a constraint that he was not released from until December 1711.²⁰⁵ Grant's remaining companies proceeded to 'North Britain' to spend their time recruiting around Stirling and Dundee.²⁰⁶ The clothing and arms of the regiment had been left behind at Portsmouth and Granville ordered the Admiralty to forward them on to the regiment via Leith on the next available transport heading that way.²⁰⁷ This lack of forward planning and corresponding inefficiency is a consequence of the hastiness with which St John tried to get such a complicated project organised and dispatched in so little time. This has further consequences. As Seymour's regiment left Portsmouth with the expedition, the garrison there was significantly weakened and invalid companies had to be hastily assigned to this duty.²⁰⁸

Again, only three months' worth of provisions was provided for the regiments to conceal their true objective in North America, as this quantity of stores was 'the usual...allowed in transporting land forces into the Mediterranean'.²⁰⁹ In some circumstances, the delays incurred by the loading of some of the stores, or the organising of some regiments and their late arrival, could be forgiven due to the unpredictability of the weather and other unforeseen events, which would have inevitably hampered any sort of organisation on this scale. However, the fact that appointments were still being made in late April – along with the belatedness with which regiments were determined for service, some supplies requested and marching orders issued – indicates a serious lack of preparedness. Why the regiments were not

²⁰⁵ Cruikshanks, Eveline; Handley, Stuart; and Hayton, D. W., (eds), *History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1690-1715*, (Cambridge, 2002), IV, p. 74; presumably Grant's petition to the Cabinet regarding an 'exchange' and sent to Marlborough, was regarding this situation, Staffordshire Record Office, D742/U/1/3, Cabinet minutes, 24 June 1711.

²⁰⁶ *The Journals of the House of Commons*, (London, 1803), XVII, 1711-1714, 2 February 1712, p. 63; TNA, WO 4/12, Granville to Burchett, 1 May 1711; Granville to Commissary General, 16 May 1711.

²⁰⁷ TNA, WO 4/12, Granville to Burchett, 1 May 1711.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Granville to Lowndes, 2 May 1711.

²⁰⁹ TNA, SP 44/213, Instructions to Hunter no. 12, 6 February 1711 (he was to supply them with three months more provisions ready at their arrival); St John to Admiralty (third letter), 16 March 1711.

identified when the train of artillery was being prepared in January defies explanation, given that St John had started to examine options in December 1710.²¹⁰ Of course, issues over authorisation may have been at fault, but St John should have been more cautious about the expedition's prospects and reconsidered its dispatch given how delayed Nicholson had been.

VI: Procuring Supplies

Procuring general supplies for the infantry lacked the efficiency of the Board of Ordnance and would take much longer to assemble and deliver. The supply of Nicholson's stores was not the only contract Blake had in connection with the expedition. St John had drawn up an agreement with him for the supply of the regiments as late as 2 March 1711. The regulars needed to be provided with huge quantities of clothing and equipment. 8,000 uniforms were required for the private soldiers (including colonials), 300 for sergeants and 226 for officers.²¹¹ Blake was also contracted for a wide variety of stores, including swords, accoutrements, devotional books, medicine, surgeons' instruments and 778 tents.²¹² Charging over £25,000, Blake was ironically the sort of new-money merchant the Tory

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, St John to Granville, 23 December 1710.

²¹¹ The uniforms of the sergeants and soldiers consisted of: 'a large coat, a pair of breeches, a hat laced [with silver for the sergeants], a pair of shoes and buckles, a pair of stockings ['fine' stockings for the sergeants], two shirts, two neck cloths, and a pair of gloves'. 1,000 'large watch gowns with hoods' were also ordered. The officers were each provided a set of: 'scarlet or blue fine cloth coat, waistcoat and breeches, a hat laced with silver, two pair of fine stockings – one pair scarlet and one pair blue, two silk neckcloths, a fusil, a guilt bayonet, a fine Tom Hawke [tomahawk], a cloth belt with frogs [fastenings] and a cartouche box, a cloth sling for the fusil', TNA, T1/132, 'Articles of Agreement...' [between St John and James Blake], 2 March 1710 [1711].

²¹² 1,000 swords, bayonets, belts, slings, cartouche boxes, and knapsacks; 450 grenadiers caps and pouches; 600 tents for soldiers; 113 officers' tents; 65 bell tents [presumable larger tents to act as stores]; and 150 drum cases. Blake was also asked to provide 9 chests of medicines; 8 cases of surgeons' instruments; 400 bibles; 400 common prayer books; 400 *Whole Duties of Man*; 1,000 'small books of devotion against swearing, drinking, etc'; 50 'prayers for the war'; 2,500 tomahawks; 2 sets of tools for smiths; 20 tools for carpenters; 200,000 nails; 20 broad axes; 50 felling axes; 100 iron wedges; and 100 iron hoops for mallets, *ibid.*

propagandists loathed, as he was no doubt profiting from the continuation of the war. Blake's order was scheduled to be fulfilled by the end of March.²¹³

The contract was not explicit about what all of this equipment was to be used for, given St John's insistence on secrecy; however, it was certainly to equip the Quebec expedition and was later used as evidence in the Earl of Oxford's impeachment.²¹⁴ Uniforms for Marlborough's army in Flanders had already crossed the Channel and were in place by March. These contracts had, of course, passed through official channels and were authorised by Parliament.²¹⁵ This was in stark contrast to the expedition's uniforms, which had only just been ordered. It was unlikely that St John himself would normally negotiate this sort of contract when there was an army of bureaucrats to handle this kind of detail.²¹⁶ However, if it were to pass through Parliament at that moment, his secret would be revealed.

The signing of Blake's contract was witnessed by John Netmaker, who was appointed commissary of the stores for the expedition. His commission, dated only the day before the contract was signed, makes his role explicit as 'commissary of the stores of war and provisions...upon the...present intended expedition... under... Brigadier-General John Hill'. This leaves no doubt as to what the purpose of these stores was. There was one unusual addition to the supplies ordered. Each officer would receive a tomahawk, with a further 2,500 ordered for the ranks.²¹⁷ The

²¹³ Blake would also receive extra monies for the 'packing, cooperage, cart hire, warehouse room, boat hire and other charges necessary', *ibid.*

²¹⁴ See chapter 5. The date of 1710, which is dated as such on the actual document, arises due to the dating norms in the Old Style. Even so, St John definitely was not a 'principal secretary of state' in March of 1710, *ibid.*

²¹⁵ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Commissioners of Transports, 31 January 1711.

²¹⁶ Officers were appointed as intermediaries with commissioners for the purpose in the Flanders army. *Ibid.*, Granville to various colonels, 3 February 1711. The minutia of detail was handled by the Secretary at War. *Ibid.*, Granville to various colonels, 26 February and 1 March 1711.

²¹⁷ TNA, T1/132, Netmaker's Commission, 1 March 1711; 'Articles of Agreement...' [between St John and James Blake], 2 March 1710 [1711].

inclusion of tomahawks, which were regularly issued to soldiers fighting in eighteenth-century North America, was highly suggestive as to the expedition's objective and demonstrates a flaw in St John's 'secret'. The contract asked for the stores to be 'speedily' transferred to boats waiting upon the Thames by the end of March. This was clearly an unrealistic proposition given the limited timescale. The fleet should ideally have been sailing by this point to take advantage of the summer months. As these stores were yet to be acquired, the expedition could not hope to sail to Boston until April at the earliest, as the sheer quantity and variety of stores required would take weeks to accumulate and transport to Spithead.

At such a late stage, delays in Britain continued as men loading stores aboard the transports were impressed into naval service and masters of some of these vessels had not received orders to take on more supplies, nor to provision the '800 men' of Disney's regiment that they would be carrying.²¹⁸ The masters' refusal to load items was simply due to the fact their vessels were not of sufficient tonnage to take on that quantity of stores, therefore St John had to acquire more transports for the job. His secrecy had impeded the preparations as the masters had not recognised the authority which desired the use of their transports. Learning his lesson, St John dispatched a surveyor to oversee the necessary preparations.²¹⁹ Commissioning these new transports meant that they would sail only once the original convoy had already left,

²¹⁸ TNA, ADM 1/4004, Craggs to Burchett, 15 March 1711; TNA, ADM 111/9, Board Investigation, 16 March 1711; TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty, 25 March 1711; TNA, SP 44/111 and SP 44/213, St John to Commissioners of Transports, 5 April 1711; TNA, ADM 1/4004, Ordnance to Admiralty, 24 April 1711.

²¹⁹ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Commissioners of Transports, 6 April 1711.

so St John approached the Admiralty asking for yet another frigate for an escort for his scheme that they had so little knowledge of.²²⁰

Granville had also directed that a hospital ship on the Thames, the *Reward*, receive some clothing and medical supplies and that a tender be prepared for the officers' baggage, but supplies were still found wanting at the end of March.²²¹ Like many of the other components of the expedition, the *Reward* was provided with only three months' provisions.²²² Obstructions in procuring supplies caused St John some distress as he demanded news of their progress.²²³ It was 9 April when the stores were at last loaded, other than the unessential 'officers' things', which St John ordered not to wait for to hasten their arrival at the Spithead rendezvous.²²⁴

When all of the transports finally sailed for Spithead, Coleby was sent to Portsmouth to oversee the final loading of regiments and stores there.²²⁵ St John, having little patience after the delays on the Thames, was eager for the stores to be distributed amongst the ships, Coleby being ordered 'you will not fail to transmit to me very frequent accounts of what progress shall be made'.²²⁶ The clothing on the *Reward*, which made up the bulk of Blake's order, was distributed by Hill amongst the regiments as late as 18 April.²²⁷ St John expressed his hope that the loading of

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, St John to Commissioners of Transports, 31 March 1711; TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty (first letter), 6 April 1711.

²²¹ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Commissioners of Transport, 19 March 1711. Supplies as yet undelivered included: 'Brandy or spirits; oatmeal; rice; sugar course and fine; raisins; currants; cinnamon; mace; nutmegs; French barley; liquorish; tamarinds; and soap' for the physicians' medicines. TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty, 27 March 1711.

²²² TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty (third letter), 16 March 1711.

²²³ *Ibid.*, St John to Commissioners of Transports; St John to Admiralty (two letters), 23 March 1711.

²²⁴ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Commissioners of Transports, 9 April 1711.

²²⁵ TNA, SP 44/111 and SP 44/213, St John to Coleby, 4 April 1711; St John to Admiralty, 5 April 1711.

²²⁶ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Commissioners of Transports, 19 April 1711.

²²⁷ TNA, SP 42/68, Hill to St John, 18 April 1711.

men and stores would be well on its way when Hill arrived at Portsmouth; however, it is evident that it was not.²²⁸

Parts of Blake's order had been duplicated. Presumably the regiments already had a clothing order as was standard at the beginning of a campaign.²²⁹ Additional medical supplies were secured when Granville wrote to the Apothecary-General asking to assign each of the regiments a 'chest of good and wholesome medicine as well internal as external' despite these being included in Blake's order.²³⁰ Whilst Colonel Clayton was in London he was asked to inform the expedition's physician, Dr Denoon, and his regimental surgeons, to inspect the delivered medicine chests for their quality before they were packed up.²³¹ Granville further informed the Admiralty Secretary that the navy need not furnish surgeons or medical supplies for their hospital ship, as he had already sent these medicine chests to the regiments.²³² Denoon's reputation must have been great. He was physician-general to the army of Portugal so it was understandable that his commander had to be consoled when he was reassigned. Denoon's replacement, Dr John Paterson, was 'well recommended on account of his ability in that profession'.²³³ Having switched establishments, Denoon was concerned about his pay given the notoriously poor efficiency of military bureaucracy. He requested to be paid until the end of April on the Portuguese establishment and sent a member of his staff to Portugal to take care of his accounts there.²³⁴

²²⁸ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Hill, 20 April 1711.

²²⁹ Scouller, *The Armies of Queen Anne*, p. 150.

²³⁰ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Teale (apothecary-general), 14 March 1711.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, Granville to Colonel Clayton, 19 March 1711.

²³² *Ibid.*, Granville to Burchett, 19 March 1711.

²³³ *Ibid.*, Granville to Portmore, 12 April 1711.

²³⁴ TNA, WO 4/12, Granville to Brydges, 16 April 1711, [erroneously refers to 'Major-General' Hill].

It was not only the Portuguese establishment that suffered. Despite Colonel Grant's regiment remaining in Britain, supplies, uniforms and transports had been requested for eight regiments. Consequently, the medicine chests of one cavalry and two dragoon regiments were withheld to furnish the regiments bound for Canada.²³⁵ The Royal Regiment of Horse Guards, and Carpenter's and Temple's Dragoons were preparing in Britain for service in Flanders, but were then prevented from going so that much needed uniforms and horses could be sent in their place.²³⁶ These were the same regiments offered to Marlborough as compensation for St John's withdrawal of five of his infantry battalions.²³⁷ As St John callously remarked in January, 'I think after that [Marlborough] cannot grumble if we take five battalions for our attempt on Quebec'.²³⁸ The Duke now had a legitimate reason to 'grumble'. The Tory ministry, muscling in on war strategy, was certainly denting Marlborough's authority.

St John also asked the Ordnance to provide tents for the marines, again, items which he contracted for privately from Blake for the other regiments.²³⁹ Unsurprisingly, St John's lack of expertise was again evident in this order. The Ordnance duly replied to say that 'this office never did furnish the marines with tents, nor have we any money given by Parliament'.²⁴⁰ St John then effectively informed the Admiralty that providing the tents was their problem.²⁴¹ It seems that St John eventually triumphed as the Ordnance relented and provided the tents, but only

²³⁵ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Teale, 26 March 1711.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, Granville to Commissioners of Transports, 26 March 1711.

²³⁷ It appears that only parts of these regiments were actually sent. Burton, Ivor F., 'The Secretary at War and the Administration of the Army during the War of the Spanish Succession' (University of London PhD thesis, 1960), pp. 135-136.

²³⁸ Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Manuscripts of His Grace the Duke of Portland*, IV, St John to Harley, 17 January 1711, p. 656; Churchill, *Marlborough: His Life and Times*, IV, p. 362.

²³⁹ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty; St John to Ordnance, 27 March 1711.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Ordnance to St John, 28 March 1711.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, St John to Admiralty (first letter), 2 April 1711.

because Colonel Churchill paid for them, who consequently sought reimbursement from the Admiralty.²⁴²

Commissary Netmaker's orders for the expedition were dated 16 April and made him responsible for all of the fleet's supplies. To preserve secrecy, Netmaker was instructed to open his further orders only once he passed forty degrees latitude. His instructions specified that Boston was his destination and that he should keep good accounts of the stores there.²⁴³ Hill was required to guarantee this secrecy and give out the necessary details once the fleet had crossed the specified latitude.²⁴⁴

Granville noted that only St John could answer for the ordnance stores and the expedition's supplies, thus emphasising the controlling grip of the Northern Secretary.²⁴⁵ Blake had honoured his order on 10 April, illustrating how late these essential supplies were actually delivered, especially as they then had to be loaded on transports and sent to Portsmouth.²⁴⁶ It was not until 19 May that St John asked for Blake's charges to be applied to the Treasury because 'the privacy with which this service was performed, [obliged] me to sign the contracts, [Blake] applies to me for payment',²⁴⁷ although St John later asked for it not to be made public 'yet'.²⁴⁸ Blake was supposed to have received this sum in two instalments after delivery, which theoretically was to have been by the end of March.²⁴⁹ In June, St John wrote to Paymaster-General Brydges, to say that he felt sorry for Blake not having been paid yet as 'the preparations...went almost singly through my hands, so it fell to me

²⁴² *Ibid.*, St John to Admiralty, 5 April 1711; TNA, SP 44/111 and SP 44/213, St John to Ordnance, 5 April 1711.

²⁴³ TNA, SP 44/213, Instructions and Secret Instructions to Netmaker, 16 April 1711.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, St John to Hill, 17 April 1711.

²⁴⁵ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Commissioners of Transports, 19 March 1711.

²⁴⁶ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Brydges, 19 May 1711.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, St John to Brydges, 19 May 1711.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, St John to Lord High Treasurer [?], 6 June 1711.

²⁴⁹ TNA, T1/132, 'Articles of Agreement...' [between St John and James Blake], 2 March 1710 [1711].

therefore to contract on this occasion by the Queen's command'.²⁵⁰ Whether the stores provided by Blake were adequate is another matter – the uniforms did not differ all that much from what soldiers wore when in Flanders.²⁵¹ It is odd that much of his order was also sought from elsewhere. However, as the contract was placed privately between St John and the merchant, rather than being administered through the Treasury, the contract was questionable and resulted in later investigations when the Whigs returned to power.

VII: Naval Vessels

The composition of the naval squadron would change and adapt as the expedition progressed, but it initially consisted of eight vessels of sixty-eighty guns, plus the two bomb ketches.²⁵² The naval vessels employed to escort the transports from the Thames and Ostend were earmarked to be those commanded by Walker to convoy the expedition to Boston. Dartmouth notified the Admiralty on 13 January that he would require eight men-of-war of third- and fourth-rate vessels for 'foreign service', to be equipped with three months' victuals for 5,000 men, by the end of February.²⁵³ Problems with supply also extended to the fleet and ships in home ports were put on short allowance so that victuals could be diverted for the expedition's use.²⁵⁴ All of the warships were ready for sea on the last day of February, but four of the vessels

²⁵⁰ Parke, *Letters and Correspondence*, I, p. 253, St John to Brydges, 22 June 1711.

²⁵¹ The only difference between the standard issue and Blake's contract seems to be the addition of gloves. TNA, T1/132, 'Articles of Agreement...' [between St John and James Blake], 2 March 1710 [1711]; Scouller, *The Armies of Queen Anne*, pp.151-152.

²⁵² *Torbay* (80), *Edgar* (70), *Monmouth* (66), *Swiftsure* (70), *Dunkirk* (60), *Kingston* (64), *Montague* (60), *Sunderland* (60), *Basilisk* (bomb), *Granada* (or *Granadoe* (bomb)) (See Merriman, 'Queen Anne's Navy' and Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, for guns).

²⁵³ TNA, ADM 1/4094/295-295, Dartmouth to Burchett, 13 January 1711. The number of workmen at the Royal Dockyards peaked around January 1711, particularly at Portsmouth and Plymouth. Merriman, 'Queen Anne's Navy', Appendix VII.

²⁵⁴ TNA, ADM 2/366/119, Admiralty to Dartmouth, 26 February 1711.

lacked provisions. They were ordered to take on victuals at the Downs, where they would join the other four warships that were on the Thames.²⁵⁵ The Admiralty condemned Walker in April for not having secured fresh provisions; however, the Admiral was then in London receiving instructions from the person who had real control over such matters – St John.²⁵⁶

The Admiralty had to enquire whether a flag officer would be needed to lead this squadron.²⁵⁷ Evidently such a question stirred the establishment into appointing a new admiral. Walker was promoted rear-admiral on 16 March.²⁵⁸ On the same date it was requested that the warships were to convoy the transports to Ostend and then on to Spithead, where Walker would assume command of them.²⁵⁹ Four were sent to convoy the Flanders force, whilst the rest escorted those remaining in the Thames. They would then have to convoy transports to Spithead, as mentioned above.²⁶⁰ It was not until 6 April that Walker received his commission to command the Quebec squadron.²⁶¹ However, discussions were still taking place over the use of additional ships two weeks later.²⁶² Walker's orders for the expedition were given to him on 11 April. He also received, on the same day, a series of instructions about the mustering, embarkation and disposition of the marines amongst the squadron, even though they had already begun to be organised by Colonel Churchill.²⁶³ Upon receiving his

²⁵⁵ TNA, ADM 2/366/120, Admiralty to St John, 28 February 1711; TNA, ADM 111/9, Burchett, 26 March under heading for 27 March 1711.

²⁵⁶ TNA, ADM 2/366/131, Admiralty to St John, 13 April 1711; Walker, 'Journal', p. 92, 11-14 April 1711.

²⁵⁷ TNA, ADM 2/366/102, Admiralty to Dartmouth, 26 January 1711.

²⁵⁸ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty (first letter), 16 March 1711.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, St John to Admiralty (second letter), 16 March 1711.

²⁶⁰ TNA, ADM 111/9, Burchett, 26 March under heading for 27 March 1711.

²⁶¹ TNA, ADM 2/43, Commissioners of the Admiralty to Walker, 3 April 1711; Walker, 'Journal', p. 91, 6 April 1711; and appendix, pp. 159-162, Walker's commission and warrants.

²⁶² TNA, SP 44/213, Various Admiralty letters to St John, 16 April 1711.

²⁶³ TNA, ADM 2/43, Admiralty to Walker, 7 April 1711; Walker, 'Journal', p. 92, 11 April 1711; and appendix, pp. 162-168, Walker's orders concerning marines and instructions are also in *ibid.* and TNA, SP 44/213, Admiralty to Walker, 23 April 1711.

orders, Walker began to prepare his squadron and attempted to send a vessel to Plymouth to take on board some marines. However, he found he could not do so as the captains in his squadron had not yet been informed that they were under his command.²⁶⁴

St John's prior experience as secretary at war did not extend to expertise in Admiralty affairs and he admitted that he despaired at the 'tedious forms of our marine management'.²⁶⁵ Ignoring current naval requirements, St John wanted the Admiralty to reinforce Walker's squadron with any ships ready at the time of his sailing, arguing 'if these ships are victualled and fitted for Channel service it will be sufficient'.²⁶⁶ Adding to the strength of the squadron was thought necessary after an alarm caused by a French squadron fitting out at Brest. The Admiralty replied that only two eighty-gun third-rates were available to reinforce Walker's squadron.²⁶⁷ It was also determined that the small squadron being sent to bolster the Leeward Islands could set out from England at the same time for collective security.²⁶⁸

St John's efforts at maintaining secrecy were further evident when he decided to send the eighty-gun vessels along with the expedition, but used their supplies to continue his deception against the Admiralty to mask their real purpose:

since the Admiralty imagine that the *Humber* and the *Devonshire* are to proceed the whole expedition along with you, those ships having but three months' provision on board them, they will be led into the error we desire, and may very naturally think that whatever service was at

²⁶⁴ Walker, *Journal*, pp. 92-93, 17 April 1711.

²⁶⁵ Especially in comparison to the period under the Earl of Nottingham's tenure, as 'St John... [lacked] Nottingham's experience of the navy. His attempt to treat the Admiralty as Nottingham had was disastrous, culminating in the dispatch of the ill-fated expedition to Quebec', Merriman, 'Queen Anne's Navy', p. 4; TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Hill, 1 May 1711.

²⁶⁶ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty, 16 April 1711.

²⁶⁷ The *Devonshire* and the *Humber*, TNA, ADM 2/366/132, Admiralty to St John, 16 April 1711.

²⁶⁸ TNA, ADM 2/366/134, Admiralty to Dartmouth, 24 April 1711.

first intended, when eight months stores and provisions were ordered, yet the design they now go upon is to be executed nearer home and but requires three months, whereas if these two ships were made up to the proportion of the others, there would be an end of this blind.²⁶⁹

These ships would sail to the mouth of the St Lawrence with Walker. Unfortunately, it was only the seamen on some of the core naval vessels of Walker's squadron who would benefit from the necessary quantity of provisions, although these ships were only actually supplied with six months' worth and even these stores would have to be shared out later.²⁷⁰

Walker's instructions were entirely composed by St John and whilst they were fairly well structured, the Admiralty had not been consulted at all. Burchett, the Admiralty secretary, was particularly scathing about this.²⁷¹ The value of Admiralty advice was evident, but it is thought that they were not informed of such details not only to hide the squadron's purpose, but also so that they could not openly oppose St John and side with a Cabinet already convinced that the expedition should be terminated.²⁷² Although with Harley's absence and the backing of the Queen and Abigail Masham, the project's continuation was assured. However, the Admiralty's ignorance preserved its reputation as it was later able to disclaim all responsibility for the disaster on the St Lawrence.²⁷³

²⁶⁹ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Walker, 21 April 1711.

²⁷⁰ Walker, 'Journal', p. 95, 2 May 1711.

²⁷¹ Burchett, Josiah, *A Complete History of the Most Remarkable Transactions at Sea*, (London, 1720), p. 778.

²⁷² Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*, III, p. 143.

²⁷³ Churchill, *Marlborough: His Life and Times*, IV, p. 392.

VIII: Conclusion

Walker and Hill had little involvement in the actual planning and organisation of the expedition. Furthermore, it is clear that St John maintained an iron grip over most processes, even when delegating tasks. Obstacles occurred in almost every aspect of the expedition's organisation, the secrecy of which was highly detrimental. This secrecy did not possess any sort of cohesion, simply the hope that it would be guessed that the fleet would sail to France, Spain or to the Mediterranean in general. To fuel this suspicion, three months' provisions were supplied to the transports despite being insufficient for the expedition's task. This ensured the fleet would meet unnecessary delay at Boston, meaning it would be precariously late in the season before Quebec could be invested. The policy of secrecy also meant that offices, including the Admiralty, Ordnance, Transports and Victualling, could not be properly consulted. Such ineffective organisation illustrates that Walker's fate was half-determined before he even received his orders.

St John's frustration was evident in some of his letters, but he had only himself to blame for the late departure of the expedition. Burchett, Coleby and Granville simply assisted in assembling the forces and were unaware of what they were for. Dartmouth's involvement is curious, as he was aware of the secret peace negotiations, but was only involved with some of the earlier processes in securing the train and dealing with some of the naval affairs. Nevertheless, his involvement ceased in February when St John became more politically assertive. Of course, those in the Cabinet who were involved with this process were also aware of St John's project. However, royal authority must have determined that they, along with Marlborough, should comply with whatever organisation St John thought necessary. Despite

ignoring the correct procedures, the Northern Secretary was able to spend a lot of money, and secure men and materiel with little in the way of explanation.

St John originally intended Walker's squadron to be present at Boston towards the end of April.²⁷⁴ He needed to have inaugurated all of the preparations much earlier to allow the expedition a fighting chance of success in reaching Boston early enough. Even if St John's intentions were revealed to the enemy, as long as preparations were completed on time, the fleet sailed early enough, and the forces properly provisioned, then this expedition stood a reasonable chance of success. The artillery stores were ready even before the commanders were appointed, but this was let down by the other elements of the expedition coming together so slowly. The expedition should have been ready to sail at the beginning of March. That tents and uniforms were not tendered before then seems preposterous. Nevertheless, this does not adequately explain the late assemblage of the regiments. Hill's force was a strong one, but the fact that important preparations were still being made in April 1711 created an unacceptable impediment. Timing was everything when concerning Canadian operations and St John's planning did not take that into proper consideration. Whilst he would often complain about the slippage of deadlines, this fault could not fall upon any other's shoulders.

Perhaps the greatest flaw was Nicholson's late departure, combined with the insufficient victuals provided, which ensured that additional supplies would not be ready when the fleet arrived at Boston. He should not have had to wait for ordnance stores or lieutenants, which should not have been a priority, but sailed with the earliest available communications vessel to present the colonial governors with their orders

²⁷⁴ TNA, SP 44/213, Instructions to Hunter no. 5, 6 February 1711.

and begin vital preparations there. The stores could follow as it was well known that it could take many days for a ship to clear the Thames and reach the sea if conditions were not right.²⁷⁵ However, such delays that were encountered in provisioning various transports must have been partially caused by a financial crisis at the Victualling Board which was the reason why there was so little pork available.²⁷⁶

Despite it being very late to dispatch the expedition and against the advice of the Cabinet in April, St John pressed for it to continue. Had the purpose of St John's organisation instead been to attack the coast of France or Spain as he dissimulated, then this would have been an impressive feat, but his planning and organisation was simply not good enough when the expedition's objective was to take Quebec and conquer New France. St John did not organise the forces through the correct protocols, nor had he envisaged delays in acquiring stores, mustering troops or repairing ships, and he most certainly did not foresee what problems the weather could inflict in an age that heavily relied upon a maritime logistics network.

²⁷⁵ Merriman, 'Queen Anne's Navy', p. 102.

²⁷⁶ Watson, P. K., 'The Commission for Victualling the Navy, the Commission for Sick and Wounded Seamen and Prisoners of War and the Commission for Transport 1702-1714' (Royal Holloway, University of London PhD thesis, 1965), pp. 25, 55, 353-355.

CHAPTER 4

THE QUEBEC EXPEDITION

The expedition was fully prepared and ready to sail by the beginning of May. Despite not being suitably provisioned, nor having the benefit of constructive advice from various departments that were not privy to the secret, the expedition's various units were nevertheless assembled and equipped in an impressive amount of time – a little under four months. Although this came far too late in the year for a force that was meant to be campaigning in Canada, there was still a chance of success if Boston was ready to load sufficient victuals upon the fleet's arrival, although this was dubious considering Lieutenant-General Francis Nicholson's delayed departure. It was time for Secretary of State Henry St John to release his project into the care of the expedition commanders, Rear-Admiral Sir Hovenden Walker and General John Hill. St John, nevertheless, maintained a degree of control through the orders he had devised for them, authorised by the Queen. Walker's concern, then, was to convoy his numerous transports across the Atlantic and evade the French threat that was posed by the forming of a privateer squadron at Brest. Nicholson had to convey orders to the colonial governors to mobilise provincial troops in America. Both he and Hill would finally have to coordinate their attack on New France. Inclement weather proved to be an obstacle to both Nicholson and Walker by postponing their sailing westward. Further problems were encountered at Boston which clearly could not cater for the expedition's needs and only created more obstacles to the fleet's timely sailing for Quebec. Ultimately, the expedition would fail after a calamity on the dreaded St Lawrence River forced the commanders to rethink their options.

I: St John's Instructions

After consulting personally with St John, both Hill and Walker received their orders for the expedition directly from Queen Anne at St James's Palace, on 11 April 1711.¹ The newspapers reported their appointments: Walker was 'commander in chief of the squadron for the intended expedition'² and 'Brigadier Hill...is to command the intended expedition'.³ Naturally it would be difficult to completely hide the fitting out and manning of such a large force, but it is evident the general public were aware of the organisation of a large expedition.

The instructions sent to Admiral Walker and General Hill illustrate how responsibilities were divided yet do not make clear, as was the norm in that period, who had overall command of the expedition. It was clearly a joint operation and command was simply structured in a manner in which Walker commanded the naval vessels and Hill the land forces, whilst important decisions were eventually taken by councils of war, which was not exactly specified in their orders.⁴ Command issues were significant, as they were often unclear and later led to a false apportioning of blame.⁵ Walker's instructions were not confined to matters pertaining to Quebec.⁶ It

¹ Walker, Hovenden, 'A Journal: Or Full Account of the Late Expedition to Canada', pp. 91-92, 11 April 1711, in Graham, Gerald S. (ed.), 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec, 1711', *Navy Records Society*, vol. XCIV, (1953) (hereafter cited as Walker, 'Journal').

² *Post Man and the Historical Account*, 12-14 April 1711, Issue 1997.

³ *The British Mercury* 16-18 April 1711, issue 167. The newspaper erroneously reported Hill was made a major-general for the expedition. He remained a brigadier-general and was given the temporary rank of general for the expedition. Hill would not receive further promotion until the following year.

⁴ McLay, Keith Andrew John, 'Combined Operations: British Naval and Military Co-operation in the Wars of 1688-1713' (University of Glasgow PhD thesis, 2003), p. 349.

⁵ Harding, Richard, 'Sailors and Gentlemen of Parade: Some Professional and Technical Problems Concerning the Conduct of Combined Operations in the Eighteenth Century', *The Historical Journal*, vol. XXXII, no. 1, (March, 1989), pp. 40-43; McLay, K. A. J., 'Sir Francis Wheler's Caribbean and North American Expedition, 1693: A Case Study in Combined Operational Command during the Reign of William III', *War in History*, vol. XIV, no. 4, (2007), p. 384.

⁶ The National Archives (hereafter cited as TNA), SP 44/213, Walker's Instructions, 11 April 1711.

had been determined to replace the marines, stationed at Annapolis Royal since its conquest the previous year, with New Englanders.⁷ After the attempt upon Quebec, Placentia in Newfoundland was also to be attacked if conditions were suitable.⁸ Otherwise, Walker's instructions left little to initiative. His task was to gather his fleet at Spithead to sail for Boston, whilst detaching storeships to New York, and then sail up the St Lawrence to Quebec. The sixth instruction specifically required that Hill be consulted upon how to approach and attack Quebec. The next ensured that Walker would assist Hill in every way he could whilst at Quebec – that his marines be placed under his sole command and that the General be provided with whatever stores, ammunition and artillery he desired.

Whilst Walker's orders consisted of a total of eleven instructions, plus two 'additional' instructions (which asked to replace stores and recruit colonials to replace any losses incurred on the transatlantic voyage), Hill's orders comprised twenty-eight instructions including supplementary orders.⁹ The supplementary instructions assigned to the commanders suggest a hastiness and lack of thought when drawing up the originals. Hill's operational authority over Walker was also apparent in his twentieth instruction which, in consultation with the Admiral, directed that he could decide if some of Walker's ships should remain in the St Lawrence after the departure of the squadron. This was despite Hill's eleventh instruction, which called for the 'speedy reducing' of Quebec, so that the whole country could be taken in time to allow the 'seasonable return of our squadron out of that river'. Hill was given the authority to negotiate terms with Governor-General Vaudreuil at Quebec. He was also entrusted with the power to appoint a new governor, and both spiritual and

⁷ TNA, SP 44/213, Walker's instructions no. 5, 11 April 1711.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Walker's instructions no. 10, 11 April 1711.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Hill's instructions, 11 April 1711 (and 15 April 1711 for the additional instructions).

temporal positions in the region, and to distribute wealth.¹⁰ It is worth noting that Hill was encouraged to preserve the buildings of Quebec and ‘strictly’ ordered not to allow ‘outrages and indecencies’ to occur, particularly in connection to any religious (Catholic) establishments or personages, as it ‘must create hatred and contempt as well in the French as Indians professing the Christian religion’.¹¹

Perhaps the most important instructions – received by both men – were given due to prior experience of similar expeditions which had met failure owing to argument at the most senior levels of command. Number eleven of Walker’s, and twenty-three of Hill’s, instructions commanded them both to cooperate and assist each other in all that they required for the good of the expedition. Whilst council of wars were not specified, this divided authority would result in much consultation between the commanders, which would logically extend to their subordinates. Such pooling of authority could be a handicap to the effective execution of a joint operation, which lacked clear leadership in some respects, however, Hill’s instructions indicated that he was superior to Walker in many operational aspects of the expedition.¹² Orders to cooperate would become standard over the coming century, as similar instructions were issued to Boscawen and Amherst, Vernon and Cathcart and Hawke and Mordaunt, in both the Austrian Succession and Seven Years Wars.¹³

Almost as an afterthought, Hill’s first ‘additional’ instruction was to attempt to create an alliance with the Indian nations which gave the French a great advantage in North America. The last additional instruction related to the lands of the Hudson’s Bay Company which had been taken by the French; Marlborough, a former governor

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Hill’s instructions, nos. 12, 14, 16, 11 April 1711.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Hill’s instructions, nos. 13, 15, 11 April 1711.

¹² Harding, ‘Sailors and Gentlemen of Parade’, p. 37; McLay, *Combined Operations*, p. 348.

¹³ Boscawen, H. G. R., *The Capture of Louisbourg, 1758*, (awaiting publication), chapter 3.

of the company, retained an interest in its operations.¹⁴ The instruction directed that the area should be recaptured and returned to the British.¹⁵ Securing the bay relied on the provision of effective security against the French and would create huge financial rewards for Britain. This afterthought may have been an example of an emerging British strategic vision. The commanders' instructions allowed St John to maintain control over the expedition even after its dispatch.¹⁶

The orders for the various colonial governors were even more problematical. Nicholson was first ordered to New York to deliver instructions to Governor Robert Hunter of New York and New Jersey, who would then pass on instructions to Governor Joseph Dudley of Massachusetts Bay and New Hampshire, despite most of the strain being placed upon Massachusetts. No doubt the reasoning behind this was to prepare the forces that would serve under Nicholson; however, the delay faced by him in crossing the Atlantic meant that the supplies for the fleet could not be gathered in time for Walker's arrival. Dudley's instructions chiefly concerned the raising of at least 1,000 men to accompany the expedition, 'which may arrive... [at the] end of April'.¹⁷ They also demanded that pilots and flat-bottomed boats be provided, and detailed intelligence on Quebec garnered.¹⁸ The ninth instruction emphasised the need for secrecy, but is enlightening as it confessed that due to 'the necessity of concealing the same we are deprived of the information we might have had in order to

¹⁴ Marlborough had previously represented the company in a petition against French encroachments. Rich, E. E., 'The Hudson's Bay Company and the Treaty of Utrecht', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, vol. XI, no. 2 (1954), pp. 183, 190-191; Holmes, Richard, *Marlborough: England's Fragile Genius*, (London, 2008), pp. 110, 135.

¹⁵ TNA, SP 44/213, Additional instructions to Hill, 15 April 1711.

¹⁶ McLay, *Combined Operations*, p. 349.

¹⁷ TNA, SP 44/213, Dudley's instructions, 6 February 1711.

¹⁸ Vetch's 1709 instructions called for the building of at least ten flat-bottomed boats able to take sixty men each. Headlam, Cecil, (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and the West Indies*, (6 vols. (1702-1712), London, 1913-1925), (hereafter cited as *CSPC*), 1708-1709, pp. 230-232, no. 387, 1 March 1709. Harding, 'Sailors and Gentlemen of Parade', p. 44, stated fifty men would be carried in these boats in 1711.

have given you more particular instructions'. This glaring admission of organisational incompetence then led to a request that the governors organise a strategy themselves, as they were more knowledgeable about the geography of the area of operations. The thirteenth and final instruction to Dudley went further – it prohibited all packet boats from sailing to Europe so that the preparations would be kept secret. In any event, the lateness with which the news and the fleet arrived virtually negated the importance of this instruction as there was only a limited window of opportunity for the expedition to succeed.

Hunter's instructions were likewise concerned with the raising of men – a total of 2,000 for the overland expedition to Montreal.¹⁹ His additional instructions stressed the importance of Nicholson as the prime organiser of this force.²⁰ It called for all of the colonial governors, as well as Nicholson and his deputy, Schuyler, to meet in Connecticut (owing to its central location), for them to work out a suitable strategy for attacking Canada. Nicholson was to have the casting vote in this council of war.²¹ The governors of Connecticut, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, and Pennsylvania, merely had supporting roles in the expedition – their instructions, almost an afterthought, essentially being to provide all assistance they could to Nicholson.²² St John lacked the authority to launch the expedition when he formulated Hunter's orders, although he had confidence as he guaranteed to Hunter

¹⁹ TNA, SP 44/213, Hunter's additional instructions, 21 February 1711; he also received notice of the expedition in his instructions of 6 February 1711.

²⁰ Although intended to follow him, these additional instructions were delivered to Nicholson before he sailed, owing to his delayed departure, *ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, Hunter's additional instructions, 21 February 1711; TNA, CO 5/898/33 and *CSPC*, 1710-1711, pp. 556-560, no. 893, minutes of a council of war, 21 June 1711, also Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', pp 302-307 and O'Callaghan, E. B. (ed.), *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, vol. V, London Documents*, (Albany, 1855), pp. 257-261.

²² TNA, SP 44/213, Instructions to the governors of Connecticut, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, and Pennsylvania.

that there would be no disappointment like that of 1710, when the promised force failed to appear.²³

Nicholson had arrived at Boston, rather than New York as explicitly stated in his orders, around 8 June – around a fortnight before Walker himself.²⁴ The *Joseph* and *Neptune* transports, sent with Nicholson, were also at Boston where their escorts were careening. Again the ‘secret’ was well advertised as colonial Judge Samuel Sewall was informed that Nicholson’s arrival was in preparation for an expedition to Canada.²⁵ The meeting of the colonial governors was held at New London on 21 June, where they discussed the raising of forces for Nicholson, as well as the problem of the two transports Nicholson left immobile at Boston.²⁶ The vast organisation necessary could only begin when the governors had returned to their respective colonies.

II: The Transatlantic Voyage

Walker arrived at Portsmouth to take command of his squadron on 16 April. Unfortunately his captains, along with Vice-Admiral Whitaker, the superior officer at the port, had not been notified of this and so it was another three days before written confirmation was received of Walker’s authority. Upon his arrival, Walker had assumed command in the seventy-gun *Edgar*, rather than a more prestigious eighty-

²³ *Ibid.*, St John to Hunter, 21 February 1711.

²⁴ There is some ambiguity here, as Sewall’s diary recorded that Nicholson arrived on 6 June 1711, in Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. VI, Fifth series, (Boston, 1879), p. 313; Graham stated that it was the 8th, ‘The Walker Expedition to Quebec’, p. 23; along with Dudley, TNA, SP 44/213, Dudley to St John, 25 July 1711; as does Leach, Douglas Edward, *Roots of Conflict: British Armed Forces and Colonial Americans, 1677-1763*, (Chapel Hill (NC), 1986), p. 144; and Walker ‘Journal’, introduction, p. 84, says 15th. TNA, SP 44/213, Instructions to Nicholson, 21 February 1711.

²⁵ Sewall’s Diary, 6 June 1711, in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, p. 314.

²⁶ TNA, CO 5/898/33 and CSPC, 1710-1711, no. 893, minutes of a council of war, 21 June 1711, pp. 556-560, also in Graham, ‘The Walker Expedition to Quebec’, pp 302-307 and O’Callaghan, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, V, pp. 257-261.

gun vessel, owing to this confusion.²⁷ St John was initially unconcerned by the fact that the fleet had yet to sail: 'Nicholson's departure indeed, makes your [Walker's] stay at Spithead not so much to be regretted as otherwise it would be'.²⁸ As the last soldiers embarked on 22 April, Walker informed St John of his hopes to sail the fleet to St Helens the next day and date the expedition from then, 'being the [anniversary] of Her Majesty's coronation'.²⁹ Unfortunately, the weather hampered the fleet, as Walker's journal noted the 'turbulent' weather prevented the boarding of transports and the placing of the mortars onto the ships.³⁰ Walker kept his promise, however, and sailed with his naval squadron to St Helens, leaving the transports behind, as some masters were 'alleging' they were still awaiting the loading of their provisions.³¹ The violence of the weather was extreme, as two of Walker's warships, the *Devonshire* and the *Swiftsure*, both lost their masts. The latter had attempted to return to the mainland to pick up some marines, but was forced back to St Helens by the strong winds.³² Strangely, Walker accused some of the masters of the transports of being negligent in not getting to St Helens. This may have been because there was a clear spell before the winds stirred.

Just as progress was beginning to be made after swift repairs to these ships, the tide and the winds were blowing the departing fleet eastwards, forcing them to again seek shelter at St Helens.³³ After the various setbacks Walker encountered he finally managed to weigh anchor and set sail on 29 April. However, he was further detained as the *Diamond*, which was part of the Leeward Islands convoy that was to sail with

²⁷ Walker, 'Journal', pp. 92-93, 16-19 and 24 April 1711.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, appendix, p. 171, St John to Walker, 20 April 1711.

²⁹ TNA, SP 42/68, Walker to St John, 22 April 1711.

³⁰ Walker, 'Journal', p. 93, 23 April 1711.

³¹ TNA, SP 42/68, Walker to St John, 24 April 1711; Walker, 'Journal', p. 93, 24 April 1711.

³² TNA, SP 42/68, Walker to St John, 24 April 1711; Walker, 'Journal', p. 93, 25 April 1711.

³³ TNA, SP 42/68, King to St John, 2 May 1711.

them for security,³⁴ and the *Devonshire* did not follow. Not only was the General on this latter ship, but it was also loaded with Hill's money for provisions and regimental pay, and with mortars for one of the bomb vessels – ordnance that was essential for the mission. Walker was therefore forced to wait. Finally, on 30 April, his magnificent flotilla of sixty-three vessels cleared Bembridge Ledge off the Isle of Wight.³⁵

They were not clear of British waters yet, however. St John was already resigned to the fact that the fleet would have to put in again at Torbay or Plymouth because of the contrary winds.³⁶ This Walker did, entering Plymouth on 2 May owing to the 'dirty weather'.³⁷ Here, the straggling *Diamond* joined the squadron, reporting to Walker the close proximity of a small squadron of French ships, which the Admiral correctly suspected were actually British.³⁸ Continuing bad weather worried St John greatly and he suggested that Walker restock at Plymouth, but pressed him to sail as soon as was feasible.³⁹ Owing to the previous obstacles to sailing, Walker duly took this opportunity to replenish his stores in case the voyage across the Atlantic took longer than anticipated. Abiding by St John's wishes to keep their objective hidden, stores for six months were placed on the escorts, but only three months' worth were placed on the transports.⁴⁰

³⁴ TNA, ADM 2/366, Admiralty to Dartmouth, 24 April 1711. The *Experiment* (32) and *Bedford* (32) *Galley* formed the remainder of the escort for the trade with the *Diamond* (42), Walker, 'Journal', p. 97, 8 May 1711 (See Merriman, R. D., (ed.), 'Queen Anne's Navy: Documents Concerning the Administration of the Navy of Queen Anne, 1702-1714', *Navy Records Society*, vol. CIII, (1961) and Winfield, Rif, *British Warships in the Age of Sail, 1603-1714*, (Barnsley, 2009), (for guns).

³⁵ Walker, 'Journal', p. 94, 29-30 April 1711; *ibid.*, appendix, p. 180, Walker to St John, 4 May 1711.

³⁶ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty and St John to Coleby, 1 May 1711.

³⁷ Walker, 'Journal', p. 94, n. 3, 1 May 1711. *Post Man and the Historical Account*, 3-5 May 1711, issue 2004, reported he was off Plymouth on 1 May with forty ships.

³⁸ They were the *Kent* (70), *Essex* (70), *Assurance* (66) and *Plymouth* (60). Walker, 'Journal', p. 95, 2 May 1711 (See Merriman, 'Queen Anne's Navy' and Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, for guns).

³⁹ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Walker, 1 May 1711; Walker, 'Journal', p. 96, 4 May 1711.

⁴⁰ Walker, 'Journal', p. 95, 2 May 1711.

Walker may as well have ignored his orders and furnished the ships with full provisions, not only because delays saw the rapid consumption of these stores, but secrecy was of little consequence as he became aware it had been potentially compromised. A French sailor in British service approached the Admiral at Plymouth because he had heard that the expedition was bound for Canada and, as he allegedly knew the St Lawrence well, wanted to serve as a pilot. Walker brushed off the rumour and attempted to maintain the secret: 'I asked him, why he imagined we were going there: to which he replied, that he had heard people talk so. I told him he was mistaken: but that if he were well acquainted with the Bay of Biscay, and the coasts about Nantes, he should go with me.'⁴¹ The Frenchman who spoke 'not one word of English' had known of the expedition's purpose. He also informed Walker that the French were strengthening the defences at Quebec, that it was strong to the seaward but weak to the landward and exaggerated the number of cannon there, saying there were about 150 guns emplaced.⁴²

Walker had previously told those suspecting he was going to Canada that he may not even depart the Channel and that the only reinforcement sent to North America was Nicholson, thus continuing St John's deception that he was sent to defend Annapolis Royal.⁴³ Others had guessed that Walker was heading for Cadiz.⁴⁴ Contemporary newspapers included wide coverage of maritime affairs, particularly ship movements. In an age when merchants relied on the sea for their profits and trade, news of the successful completion of cargo voyages was invaluable. Their

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 95, 3 May 1711.

⁴² *Ibid.*, appendix, p. 180, Walker to St John, 4 May 1711.

⁴³ St John also informed Drummond of this design to disseminate the lie on the continent, Parke, Gilbert, *Letters and Correspondence, Public and Private, of the Right Honourable Henry St John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke; During the Time He was Secretary of State to Queen Anne...*, (London, 1798), I, p. 112, St John to Drummond, 20 March 1711.

⁴⁴ Walker, 'Journal', appendix, p. 293, Walker to St John, 30 April 1711.

naval escorts were also often reported, which made the secrecy surrounding the expedition unnecessary. Given such details of the status of shipping, French spies had their information confirmed only a few days after the vessels were sighted.

With the fleet still at Plymouth, Colonel King's anxiety mirrored St John's. This was demonstrated when he described to the Northern Secretary how the weather constantly prevented the fleet's departure: 'the perverseness of the winds... heartily afflict me'. His political sympathies were also revealed when he continued: 'I am sensible of the great concern it must give you, both as you are a good patriot and that this expedition is such an offspring of your own, what must prove in all humane appearance a more solid advantage to England, than all those glaring battles and sieges which have made of late years such a mighty figure in the gazettes.'⁴⁵ He had not long to wait. Walker shifted his flag to the eighty-gun *Humber* whilst at Plymouth and departed on 4 May, with sixty-four sail, including merchantmen for the Leeward Islands and their three escorts.⁴⁶ He also commandeered four more naval vessels to convoy him through the dangerous hunting grounds of the French privateers.⁴⁷

Walker parted from these escorts and the Leeward Islands trade, when over 300 miles from British waters. The *Torbay* was also sent with them and he would have also sent the *Swiftsure* back too, as its captain reported it was in a poor condition, if it were not for the fact that it carried a substantial number of marines.⁴⁸ This was reported in the newspapers almost two weeks later, when the cruisers entered Plymouth and announced they had separated from Walker's fleet 150 leagues

⁴⁵ TNA, SP 42/68, King to St John, 2 May 1711.

⁴⁶ The *Diamond*, *Bedford Galley* and *Experiment*. Walker, 'Journal', p. 96, 4 May 1711; *Post Man and the Historical Account*, 5-8 May 1711, issue 2005.

⁴⁷ These were the *Kent*, *Essex*, *Assurance* and *Plymouth* being the vessels the *Enterprise* earlier mistook for being French. The *Assurance* was sent back to Plymouth as it was in a poor condition. Walker, 'Journal', p. 96, 5 May 1711.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97, 8 May 1711.

west of the Isles of Scilly.⁴⁹ Two weeks later, the *Kingston* parted from the fleet to escort the *Mary* storeship to New York, where it would gather much needed victuals to reduce the burden on Boston.⁵⁰ Eight warships, aside from the bomb ketches, remained with Walker.⁵¹

The problems of transoceanic navigation are perceptible in Walker's journal as true longitude had yet to be accurately measured. Lines of latitude could be determined, however, allowing the navigators of the age to fix a rough position for their vessels. Still, this could leave a considerable margin of error.⁵² Walker's course in the mid-Atlantic followed a corridor between forty-three and forty-seven degrees north. This followed a normal course set by eighteenth-century sailors to Canada, to take advantage of the westward currents. This may be surprising as it goes against the prevailing westerly winds of the North Atlantic.⁵³ It could offer the quickest route if the winds were favourable, as to take the easterlies further to the south would offer a voyage of equal length under normal conditions by extending the distance travelled.⁵⁴ From Walker's journal, it appears that the fleet suffered relatively little trouble from its westward progress, apart from between 10-19 May, when the winds pushed them southwards.⁵⁵ The fleet did suffer from storms and fogs which scattered its ships during June and they often sighted 'islands of ice...which rendered the weather very

⁴⁹ The *Kent*, *Essex*, and *Torbay* reported in the *Post Man and the Historical Account*, 19-22 May 1711, issue 2011.

⁵⁰ Walker, 'Journal', p. 98, 22 May 1711. The *Kingston* carried sixty-four-guns, (See Merriman, 'Queen Anne's Navy' and Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, for rating).

⁵¹ These were the *Devonshire* (80), *Humber* (80), *Edgar* (70), *Monmouth* (66), *Swiftsure* (70), *Dunkirk* (60), *Montague* (64) and *Sunderland* (60). The bomb ketches were the *Basilisk* and *Granada*, (See Merriman, 'Queen Anne's Navy' and Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, for guns).

⁵² Taylor, E. G. R., *The Haven-finding Art: A History of Navigation from Odysseus to Captain Cook*, (London, 1956), pp. 252-261.

⁵³ Proulx, Gilles, *Between France and New France: Life Aboard the Tall Sailing Ships*, (Toronto and Charlottetown, 1984), pp. 47-54; Rodger, N. A. M., *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815*, (London, 2004), map of the North Atlantic, pp. lviii-lix.

⁵⁴ Steele, Ian K., *The English Atlantic 1675-1740: An Exploration of Communication and Community*, (New York; Oxford, 1986), p. 79.

⁵⁵ Walker, 'Journal', 5 May-25 June 1711.

cold'.⁵⁶ The *Montague* was detailed to patrol near Cape Sable to await these stragglers.⁵⁷ It was at this point, near to their arrival at Boston, that those in the fleet were informed of their mission.⁵⁸

According to various newspapers printed in July 1711, it appears that St John had provided enough disinformation to cause uncertainty amongst the French and Spanish of Walker's intended destination. *The British Mercury* reported that the French Brest squadron sailed to the coast of Portugal, 'though some are of the opinion that they are gone after Admiral Walker'.⁵⁹ The same newspaper later reported that the British squadron present at Lisbon on 7 June was actually Walker's.⁶⁰ *The British Mercury* and *The Daily Courant* also repeated news from the *Paris Gazette* of 20 June that the defences of Galicia and Andalusia had been reinforced with both militia and regulars upon news of the fitting out of Walker's squadron.⁶¹ If so, this was a surprising and beneficial result of the expedition. St John, meanwhile, was desperate for news of Nicholson's progress. Having heard that a Boston vessel had arrived at Greenock, he sent for news by way of the Mayor of Glasgow.⁶² St John gained confidence from this, as he realised that the 'great fleet' which had been spotted could be none other than Walker's and readily informed Queen Anne.⁶³ However, all French illusions would have vanished with the publication of a *Daily Courant* report on 31 July, which disclosed that the captain of the merchant vessel *Rose* had sighted Walker on his voyage from North America and divulged that the fleet was then at

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99, 5-24 June 1711; TNA, ADM 51/614, Captain's log *Montague*, 12 June 1711.

⁵⁷ TNA, ADM 51/614, Captain's log *Montague*, 20 June 1711; Walker, 'Journal', p. 99, 19 June 1711.

⁵⁸ *Daily Courant*, 20 September 1711, issue 3101.

⁵⁹ *The British Mercury*, 8-11 June 1711, issue 190.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 2-4 July 1711, issue 200.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 20-22 June 1711, issue 195; *The Daily Courant*, 22 June 1711, issue 3024. It is not clear which calendar the 20 June date given for the *Paris Gazette* followed.

⁶² TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Mayor of Glasgow, 6 July 1711.

⁶³ Parke, *Letters and Correspondence*, I, p. 265, St John to the Queen, 5 July 1711.

New England preparing to proceed to Canada.⁶⁴ The purpose of the expedition was now public knowledge and this dispatch resulted in some spurious propaganda which claimed Walker had already taken several ships and towns.⁶⁵ Fortunately, Walker had arrived at Boston at the end of June without being harassed by privateers. Whilst they had provided a fleeting moment of concern for St John, it was Portuguese interests, not British, which would ultimately suffer from their attention.

III: The French Squadron

The French Navy had, by 1711, virtually abandoned the Atlantic, leaving the fighting in this theatre to state-sponsored privateers.⁶⁶ One such squadron had been fitting out in the French Atlantic ports, financed through private rather than state means. News of these preparations caused quite a stir in London. There had been rumours of another attempt by the Pretender to land in Britain. St John had other fears – the interception of Walker or the reinforcement of Canada. These worries later proved to be unfounded, although they reveal some interesting insights into Walker's expedition.

An impressive intelligence-gathering operation ensued when the Earl of Dartmouth began to periodically send frigates to reconnoitre Brest.⁶⁷ Orders were given to a spy to proceed to Dunkirk, St Malo, Rochefort, Port Louis (Lorient) and Brest, via Dover, Ostend and Flanders, to covertly acquire all possible information

⁶⁴ *The Daily Courant*, 31 July 1711, issue 3057.

⁶⁵ *A New Express from Sir Hovendon [sic] Walker...*, (London, 17 August 1711).

⁶⁶ Jenkins, E. H., *A History of the French Navy*, (London, 1973), p. 105; Kennedy, Paul, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, (London, 2001), p. 82; Mahan, T. E., *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*, (London, 1890), p. 216.

⁶⁷ TNA, ADM 1/4094/287 and 363, Dartmouth to Admiralty, 30 December 1710 and 19 February 1711. Normally intelligence about French naval movements was mainly sourced from public newsletters, Alsop, J. D., 'The Age of the Projectors: British Imperial Strategy in the North Atlantic in the War of Spanish Succession', *Acadiensis*, vol. XXI, no.1, (Autumn, 1991), p. 32.

regarding shipping preparations, military strengths and merchant ambitions. The spy was requested to find information about the former governor of Port Royal, Subercase, and whether he was planning a recovery of Annapolis Royal and what the French hopes were in the region, how they were supporting New France, and if they wanted to strike at the British colonies in America.⁶⁸ Concrete intelligence of the preparation of a French squadron, privately funded 'to go a cruising, for an affair of commerce', was received in March 1711. It warned of seven ships fitting out – four at Brest, two at Port Louis and one at Rochefort; and René Duguay-Trouin had been correctly identified as the commander.⁶⁹

The financial aspect of the preparations was later confirmed in Paris, out of Minister of Marine Pontchartrain's office, as the clerks there stated that the 'court has no share in the squadron'. Included in the same report was Jean Baptiste Du Casse's intention of sailing with three vessels to America once the winds had eased.⁷⁰ Information about these preparations had even been discussed in Cabinet in March when the Admiralty was ordered to keep abreast of the French Atlantic preparations and, after consultation, ordered Admiral Leake's Channel squadron to cruise off Brest and intercept any attempted breakout.⁷¹ The Admiralty had even complained that Walker had taken three cruisers with him that should have been on patrol in the Downs.⁷² Walker was only following St John's directions because of the threat in

⁶⁸ TNA, SP 41/3/274, 'Instructions for – [a spy in the ports of western France]', undated but suggested as being March 1711. St John requested Drummond to employ such a spy, Parke, *Letters and Correspondence*, I, p. 87, St John to Drummond, 2 March 1711.

⁶⁹ TNA, SP 44/215, Lewis to Burchett and Brighter, 29 March 1711 (intelligence dated 22 March 1711 at Brest).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Intelligence report of 3 April 1711.

⁷¹ Staffordshire Record Office (hereafter cited as SRO), D(W)1778/V/188/136; 165;166, Cabinet minutes, 29 March; 19 May; 20 May 1711, (Leake had twenty men-of-war and six frigates).

⁷² These ships were the *Essex*, *Kent* and *Plymouth* described above and were returned once Walker cleared home waters. TNA, ADM 2/366, Admiralty to St John, 8 May 1711.

Brittany.⁷³ The Admiralty's attitude may be explained by their earlier description of the Brest squadron as 'not only a danger to [Walker] – but to the nation'.⁷⁴

Intelligence was also passed on by Dutch privateers through the capture of French fishing vessels.⁷⁵ A further report detailed news from Paris that the warships at Brest would join those at Rochefort and Port Louis, and were to embark troops 'to make some enterprise in America'.⁷⁶ St John appeared to be unconcerned by theories of an emerging Jacobite threat from the French ports. He did not deny the intelligence, but instead saw it as mischief-making by the French and could not see the execution of such a threat when Walker had already sailed.⁷⁷ Meanwhile, Duguay-Trouin was actually planning a raid of profit and vengeance against the Portuguese colony of Rio de Janeiro, after a similar French attempt the year before, under Jean-François Du Clerc, turned into a farcical expedition resulting in the imprisonment of its survivors.⁷⁸

Spies in Paris continued to busy themselves in acquiring information about the squadron being assembled in Brittany. They had determined that 3,000 soldiers were earmarked for service with that flotilla and, whilst their task was still uncertain, it had been hinted they were destined for 'Spanish America, in order to secure some important post and bring back great riches'.⁷⁹ The likely (and as it turns out, precise) destination of Duguay-Trouin's squadron was identified as Rio de Janeiro. This did

⁷³ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty, 9 May 1711; Walker, 'Journal', appendix, p. 168, St John to Walker, 16 April 1711.

⁷⁴ TNA, ADM 2/366/135, Admiralty to St John, 2 May 1711.

⁷⁵ TNA, SP 44/213, Pieter de Reyser to Henry Hooke (passed on to St John), 29 April 1711.

⁷⁶ TNA, SP 44/215, Lewis (assumed to be Erasmus, under-secretary of state to Dartmouth) to Burchett, 6 April 1711 (intelligence dated 27 April [erroneously? As March would be more logical] 1711 (NS) at Paris).

⁷⁷ Parke, *Letters and Correspondence*, I, pp. 189-90, St John to Raby, 6 May 1711.

⁷⁸ Boxer, Charles Ralph, *The Golden Age of Brazil, 1695-1750: Growing Pains of a Colonial Society*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1975), p. 92.

⁷⁹ TNA, SP 44/215, Lewis to Burchett, 15 May 1711 (intelligence dated 11 May 1711 (NS) in Paris).

not worry the spies compiling this intelligence, as they were aware of Leake's squadron in the Channel which would 'easily match that from Brest to avoid any surprises'.⁸⁰ Further reports detailed various naval preparations in the Atlantic ports, but also alluded to the English and Dutch colonies as being the French targets, although Brazil was again suspected. The squadron was provisioned for eight months and was predicted to sail in mid-June.⁸¹

Further details were received from across France. Intelligence from Paris revealed that the Comte de Toulouse, commander of the French fleet at Malaga, gave 100,000 livres for the expedition; from Dunkirk, that the *Mars* would complement Duguay-Trouin's squadron; from La Rochelle, that the Brest squadron was definitely destined for Brazil; and from Rotterdam, where a known Jacobite suggested that the Pretender would sail either from Brest or Dunkirk and already had funding to do so.⁸² A comprehensive account of the French preparations was sent from La Rochelle. It detailed that the squadron consisted of nineteen vessels and 3,000 troops, that it intended to strike at Rio de Janeiro and also that Duguay-Trouin was concerned about departing Brest after hearing that Admiral Leake was intent on intercepting his squadron.⁸³ It was also communicated that a new French intendant for Quebec, Begon, was about to sail from La Rochelle.⁸⁴ Given the wealth of intelligence available to the ministry in London, it was likely that French spies were equally

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Lewis to Burchett, 15 May 1711 (intelligence dated 15 May 1711 in Paris).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Intelligence reports included with Lewis to Burchett, 21 May 1711.

⁸² SRO, D(W)1778/V/188/167, French intelligence reports for the Cabinet, 14-25 May 1711 (NS); Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil*, p. 93, also mentions the 100,000 livre donation.

⁸³ TNA, SP 44/215, Lewis to Burchett, 12 June 1711 (intelligence dated 9 June 1711 (NS) in La Rochelle). Jenkins stated that it consisted of the seventy-four-gun *Lys*, six frigates (two of forty-guns), two privateers, one bomb vessel and 2,000 troops in *A History of the French Navy*, p. 104.

⁸⁴ TNA, SP 44/215, Lewis to Burchett, 21 May; 12 June 1711 (intelligence dated 14 May and 9 June 1711 in Rochelle); SRO, D(W)1778/V/188/167 (intelligence dated 14 May 1711 (NS) at La Rochelle).

competent and were possibly themselves sending warning of Walker's squadron with Begot.

Whilst St John had initially been unconcerned about the fitting out of such a squadron in Brest, he must have suddenly feared the worst by the imminent sailing of the French. Such was the scare that he finally decided to reveal to the Admiralty the purpose of his expedition. On 7 June, St John informed them that Walker was destined for Quebec and discussed how best to respond to the threat in relation to the expedition's security.⁸⁵ The Admiralty thought that they could not prescribe what action to take without consulting Leake himself. Three days later, orders were sent to Leake to ready five ships to reinforce Walker in the event that Duguay-Trouin had sailed for Canada. The Admiralty was of the 'opinion that two ships of seventy, two of sixty and one of fifty guns will be a sufficient number to dispute with the French'.⁸⁶ It was later determined that those ships would not be needed, as Walker was thought strong enough to counter Duguay-Trouin with his own squadron. Nevertheless, a frigate was sent to Walker with this news, whilst Leake had yet to arrive off Brest.⁸⁷ Eventually, Leake was ordered in to water after it became obvious that he had missed Duguay-Trouin's departure.⁸⁸ This was unfortunate, as Duguay-Trouin was so concerned by the possibility of Leake's presence that he altered the squadron's rendezvous from Brest to La Rochelle – avoiding Leake by only two days.⁸⁹ The French commander's worries were confirmed in an intelligence dispatch to the Cabinet, which stated that Duguay-Trouin had feared he would never depart France if

⁸⁵ SRO, D(W)1778/V/188/176, Cabinet minutes, 7 June 1711; Burchett, Josiah, *A Complete History of the Most Remarkable Transactions at Sea*, (London, 1720), p. 778.

⁸⁶ SRO, D(W)1778/V/188/177, Cabinet minutes, 10 June 1711.

⁸⁷ SRO, D(W)1778/V/188/178, Cabinet minutes, 11 June 1711.

⁸⁸ SRO, D(W)1778/V/188/182, Cabinet minutes, 17 June 1711.

⁸⁹ Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil*, p. 94.

Leake appeared off La Rochelle. This dispatch also confirmed that Brazil was his target and specifically mentioned that the French had no clue as to where Walker was headed.⁹⁰

The information gathered was mostly accurate and useful, but used to little effect. Leake was finally ordered away from the French coast on 29 June as it was clear that Duguay-Trouin had successfully evaded the Channel squadron.⁹¹ Despite the secrecy surrounding French intentions, the British were aware that Rio de Janeiro was its target, and – owing to a lack of Portuguese vessels available – a British packet boat was dispatched by Leake to warn Brazil. The Portuguese garrison was still taken by surprise despite the British message arriving before Duguay-Trouin's squadron. Due to a mixture of complacency and incompetence, the Portuguese wasted their opportunity to prepare an effective defence.⁹² The French were able to land on Cobra Island, adjacent to the city, from where they engaged the forts. Being ill-prepared and poorly led, the Portuguese were unable to repel the French when they landed and so agreed to pay a ransom for their city.⁹³

It is perhaps ironic, that with all of the preparations made by St John, his project ultimately failed to capture the capital of an American empire, whereas the French, through private enterprise sanctioned by the state, were at the same time able to capture the capital of another American empire, albeit briefly. This should not be compared operationally with Walker's failure, however. The aims of the British and French expeditions completely differed, necessitating distinct approaches to their tasks. For Walker and Hill, Quebec would not just be captured – it would be

⁹⁰ SRO, D742/U/1/2, Captain Holland's intelligence report from Reims, 22 June 1711.

⁹¹ SRO, D742/U/1/6, Cabinet minutes, 29 June 1711.

⁹² Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil*, pp. 94-101.

⁹³ Jenkins, *A History of the French Navy*, p. 104.

conquered, resulting in New France being administered by the British indefinitely unless the peace treaty dictated otherwise. Duguay-Trouin was merely concerned with profit, plunder and revenge, which was achieved. However, Lisbon realised that if it had lost Rio de Janeiro then it was in no position to retake it without the aid of its allies. This would, in effect, have handed the colony to the maritime powers.⁹⁴ The attack on Brazil was thus more an act of state-sanctioned piracy than global strategy. Also, Duguay-Trouin had an easier navigational task ahead of him, as the captain of the *Magnanime* had previously visited Rio de Janeiro (although it should be acknowledged that they showed excellent seamanship in taking such a precise course into its harbour).⁹⁵

Nevertheless, the motives of such a raid should not be used to denigrate the scale of the French achievement in Brazil. The French had to withdraw before reinforcements (and better commanders) were brought up from Minas Gerais – Duguay-Trouin had no intention of repeating the mistakes Du Clerc made in 1710.⁹⁶ In the event Duguay-Trouin avenged Du Clerc, made a decent profit and restored a little French honour, but also suffered in a similar fashion to Walker. On his homeward voyage he lost two ships near the Azores in a storm, including Duguay-Trouin's most heavily armed ship, the seventy-four-gun *Magnanime*,⁹⁷ along with much of his booty.⁹⁸ Despite the efforts of Leake to provide warning to Rio de Janeiro, the British unfairly received Portuguese protestations about their commitment to the protection of Brazil, perhaps concerned about British imperial expansion as seen at Gibraltar and Port Mahon. In 1712 the Cabinet had to reassure the Portuguese

⁹⁴ Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil*, p. 104.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 95; Jenkins, *A History of the French Navy*, p. 104.

⁹⁶ Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil*, p. 102.

⁹⁷ TNA, SP 44/215, List of ships of the French squadron, 12 June 1711.

⁹⁸ Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil*, p. 103.

envoy that they would do everything within their power to protect the dominions of King Pedro.⁹⁹

IV: At Boston

The fleet arrived at Boston in fairly good time. Fast packet boat voyages could take between four and thirteen weeks to make the journey from London to Boston. The average from 1711 to 1739 was seven and a half weeks.¹⁰⁰ French vessels usually took around seven weeks to reach Acadia, indicating that Walker could expect the journey to take the best part of two months, which it did.¹⁰¹ The majority of Walker's fleet arrived at Nantasket Bay, just outside Boston, on 25 June and it was decided that to keep the troops in good condition they should disembark and camp on Noddles Island opposite the town. They found that the important matter of victualling was far behind schedule, however, as Governor Dudley was absent because he was still travelling back from the meeting of the governors at New London.¹⁰² Upon Dudley's arrival two days later, Walker got into his stride and started ordering ships to be repaired and initiated the acquisition of supplies, setting up a system of credit to be used for that purpose. He was dismayed to find that the *Joseph* and *Neptune* transports, which had accompanied Nicholson, had not sailed on to New York and

⁹⁹ SRO, D742/U/1/127, Cabinet minutes, 12 May 1712.

¹⁰⁰ Steele, *The English Atlantic*, p. 295, table 4.4.

¹⁰¹ Proulx, *Between France and New France*, p. 57, table 9.

¹⁰² TNA, SP 42/68, Hill to St John, 31 July 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 339; TNA, CO 5/9, Hill's journal, 25 June 1711. Dudley arrived at Boston on 27 June, Sewall's Diary, 27 June 1711, in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, p. 317; Waller, G. M., *Samuel Vetch, Colonial Enterpriser*, (Chapel Hill (NC), 1960), p. 211.

ordered their immediate dispatch.¹⁰³ After escorting these storeships, cruisers were to patrol Placentia for intelligence.

One transport was missing from the flotilla that sailed into Boston. The *Mary* (not to be confused with the *Mary* earlier detached to New York with the *Kingston*), carrying two companies of Disney's, along with clothing, had been lost around the Scilly Isles.¹⁰⁴ It later transpired that the transport had gone to Ireland after losing the fleet.¹⁰⁵ A frigate was ordered to convoy the *Mary* to Cork before sailing on to Boston. St John, ever mindful of secrecy, ordered that instructions sent to the frigate captain were not to be opened until they were 100 leagues west of Ireland.¹⁰⁶ These orders, however, had not been passed on and the *Mary* was laid up in Ireland for another three months.¹⁰⁷ This enraged St John, who could only guess as to the reasons why the master did not sail to Boston: 'his ignorance, his stupidity or his unwillingness to go the voyage'.¹⁰⁸ The *Mary* was consequently ordered to continue to Boston with the *Adventure* escort of forty-two guns, although the troops were eventually sent aboard the frigate, with the *Mary* discharged and sent to England.¹⁰⁹

This was not all. The clothing for Disney's regiment, which was now missing, had to be made up by that provided by Blake. These clothes 'were found not only extremely bad...but wholly unfit for the men's wearing in so cold a climate as Canada'.¹¹⁰ The colonels had complained of the quality and that it should be 'laid

¹⁰³ TNA, SP 42/68, Walker to Burchett, 14 August 1711; Walker, 'Journal', introduction, p. 84; Walker to Dudley, 14 July 1711, Walker, 'Journal', appendix, p. 202, Walker to Dudley, 14 July 1711; Walker, 'Journal', pp. 100, 104, 25 and 28 June 1711.

¹⁰⁴ TNA, SP 42/68, Hill to St John, 31 July 1711.

¹⁰⁵ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Admiralty, 28 May 1711 and report from Dublin, 22 May 1711.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, St John to Burchett and 'Instructions to commander of such ship', 29 May 1711.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, St John to Admiralty, 20 July 1711.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, St John to Hill, 7 August 1711.

¹⁰⁹ TNA, SP 44/213, Wade to Transports, 29 July 1711; Transports to St John, 9 August 1711; St John to Admiralty, 10 August 1711.

¹¹⁰ TNA, SP 42/68, Hill to St John, 11 August 1711.

before...St John, to show how he and the government have been imposed on [by] the [suppliers]'.¹¹¹ Incidentally, the quality of uniforms remained poor for the North American garrisons in 1713.¹¹² The colonels also had concerns about 'the great confusion' with pay and mustering as was normally the case with expeditions to the 'West Indies'.¹¹³ These issues may have caused grievances down the chain of command in what was an already unpopular posting.

The British military presence at Boston had set a precedent: 'The force which Her Majesty sends is by much the largest that ever appeared in that part of the world'.¹¹⁴ Neither the British nor French colonies had ever seen such a large military force. The sight that would have greeted Bostonians in late June 1711 must have been awesome. The population of Boston exceeded that of New York, yet the Bostonians then found themselves heavily outnumbered by soldiers and sailors. Its population consisted of only 6,700 in 1700, rising to a mere 12,000 by 1720.¹¹⁵ At least 10,000 men had just arrived from the Old World, making for an interesting time for the locals. As much of the force was supplied with only three months' provisions in an effort to deceive the French as to their intended objective, Boston was to make up for this deficit. Due to the comparatively small population of what was then the largest city in the British colonies, this part of St John's strategy put great strain upon New England. The port itself had to quickly adapt to its visitors. Visiting vessels usually

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, Colonels to Hill, 31 July 1711.

¹¹² Chartrand, Rene, 'Early British Regulars in Canada, 1697-1717', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, vol. LXXVI, (1998), p. 4.

¹¹³ TNA, SP 42/68, Colonels to Hill, 25 July 1711; TNA, CO5/9/11, Colonels to Hill, 25 July 1711.

¹¹⁴ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Nicholson, 2 April 1711; Churchill, Winston S., *Marlborough: His Life and Times*, (London, 1938), IV, p. 391; Harding, Richard, 'The Expeditions to Quebec, 1690 and 1711: The Evolution of British Trans-Atlantic Amphibious Power', in *Guerres Maritimes, 1688-1713*, (1996), p. 205.

¹¹⁵ Steele, *The English Atlantic*, p. 294, table 4.1.

averaged fifty tons yet Walker's flagship, the *Humber*, rated at almost 1,300.¹¹⁶ This was evident by the reaction of visiting Mohawks, who were 'surprised and amazed, as well as pleased, at the bigness of the ship and the number of men and guns which they saw'.¹¹⁷

To cope with feeding and victualling such a large force, the local breeding stock had to be slaughtered, whilst the entire New England market could not meet the demand for salted foodstuffs.¹¹⁸ The problems were multiplied as Boston was already short of food and Walker was not provided with enough money to cover the purchases in a market short on supply. Consequently, bills of credit had to be drawn up.¹¹⁹ During these summer months, fruit and vegetables were only just becoming available, whilst the winter's salt provisions had mostly been consumed. Indeed, the city usually relied upon other colonies to maintain sufficient food reserves.¹²⁰ Also, excess bread, meat and vegetables were sent to the West Indies before the fleet's arrival. This could have been prevented if Nicholson had arrived earlier.¹²¹ Providing adequately for the fleet was simply beyond New England's capability. Livestock, fruit and vegetables were to be sent to Boston on a daily basis, where they would be paid for and sent to the thousands of men occupying Noddles Island.¹²²

Boston could barely afford to feed these new neighbours, let alone amass a further supply to feed themselves over the coming months. The religious zeal of

¹¹⁶ Only one vessel at Boston was 'registered as large as 600 tons', Harding, 'The Expeditions to Quebec', pp. 210-211. The *Humber* weighed in at almost 1,300 tons, Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, p. 72.

¹¹⁷ Walker, 'Journal', p. 125, 23 July 1711.

¹¹⁸ TNA, CO 5/898/41, Dudley Proclamation, 3 July 1711; Harding, 'The Expeditions to Quebec', pp. 210-211; Leach, *Roots of Conflict*, p. 35.

¹¹⁹ Leach, *Roots of Conflict*, p. 33.

¹²⁰ Osgood, Herbert L., *The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century*, (New York, 1930), I, pp. 444-445; Waller, *Samuel Vetch*, p. 212.

¹²¹ Walker, 'Journal', pp. 110-111, Addlington to Walker, 2 July 1711.

¹²² TNA, CO 5/865/381, Proclamation of Dudley, 3 July 1711.

Massachusetts was revealed in Governor Dudley's declaration that a fast, on no less than three occasions, all Thursdays, would be held to better the prospects of the expedition.¹²³ Another reason might have been to stretch the supplies of the colony as far as possible without overly annoying the local populace. Problems with equipping the fleet with victuals were so acute that, only a week after Walker's arrival, an order from Dudley demanded that all provisions stored privately should be made available to the British, particularly salted provisions. The aptly named Commissary-General Belcher was also ordered to commandeer any such victuals that arrived in port; and the *Basilisk* bomb ketch was employed to stop and search vessels suspected of covertly carrying surplus provisions.¹²⁴ The people of Boston would suffer for the assistance provided to the expedition as food from Ireland had to be delivered to Boston to replace that given to the fleet.¹²⁵ Such problems would add to Walker's misery when the Whigs returned to power.

With respect to secrecy, Dudley's proclamation of a general fast also referred to the three commanders and their responsibilities: General Hill – 'commander in chief of the said forces', Sir Hovenden Walker – 'admiral on the sea part', and Lieutenant-General Nicholson – 'on the inland part'.¹²⁶ The strategy was thus laid out for all to see as the two-pronged assault on Canada was now advertised. Quebec was beginning to look vulnerable. The French at Quebec were also aware of the British visitors. An English prisoner, perhaps Major Livingston, had informed them that he expected the British to strike at Montreal and the rest of Canada. French ships and

¹²³ TNA, CO 5/865/378 and 498, Proclamation of Dudley, 16 July 1711.

¹²⁴ Provisions included: beef and pork; biscuit; wheat; flower; peas; rice; butter and cheese. TNA, CO 5/865/399, Proclamation of Dudley, 2 July 1711; Walker 'Journal', p. 110, 2 July 1711. Belcher's actions pushed up prices across Boston, Osgood, *The American Colonies*, I, p. 448.

¹²⁵ Leach, *Roots of Conflict*, p. 35.

¹²⁶ TNA, CO 5/865/378 and 498, Proclamation of Dudley, 16 July 1711.

spies had passed on intelligence of the arrival of both Nicholson and the fleet, giving a fairly accurate description of its composition. Also, 200 bateaux were described as being ready, with another 100 on their way, whilst the Iroquois had been consulted by Hunter about their providing a contribution to the expedition.¹²⁷ The Quebecois would have been aware of the general clamour in the neighbouring colonies even without Dudley's proclamations.

The British regiments faced significant difficulties with desertion at Boston. This vexed Hill, as indicated in a number of entries in his journal, and it also affected Walker's sailors. 5,303 soldiers reportedly sailed with the transports from Plymouth and 3,500 effective men were reviewed at Boston, but that is not to suggest that almost 2,000 deserted there.¹²⁸ A soldier in Hill's, named Carrol, earned the distinction of being the first to desert – in England. He was caught and sentenced to prison, but the judge was ordered by Granville to deliver the man back to his regiment.¹²⁹ Hill commented that the troops arriving at Boston 'landed in much better condition than we expected, after a voyage of eight weeks', but the local populace soon encouraged the men to desert to provide labour. Boredom and the opportunity for a better life probably motivated the soldiers and sailors, who idly waited on Noddles Island which separated them from the main population of Boston and the enticement of better pay. The commanders attempted to tackle the loss in manpower. Those that were caught and not acquitted suffered a variety of punishments, including

¹²⁷ O'Callaghan, E. B. (ed.), *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, vol. IX, *Paris Documents*, (Albany, 1855), p. 859, Vaudreuil to Pontchartrain, 25 October 1711; Walker, 'Journal', appendix, p. 310, Hunter to Board of Trade, 17 August 1711.

¹²⁸ Walker, 'Journal', appendix, pp. 178-179, list of transports; TNA, CO 5/898, King's journal, 10 July 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 322.

¹²⁹ TNA, WO 4/10, Granville to Mr Justice Negus, 14 March 1711.

whipping and death by hanging or firing squad.¹³⁰ A partial solution to the problem presented itself in the form of local volunteers. Many senior officers were glad to fill the holes in their ranks and allowed such men to join their regiments. When Hill discovered this he immediately discharged them as the volunteers were black.¹³¹ Perhaps this was the first time black men had, albeit fleetingly, served in veteran European regiments not permanently stationed in the colonies.¹³²

King, already worried by the weak under-manning of the regiments and warships, stated that over 250 men had deserted after a month at Boston.¹³³ Such problems forced Dudley to issue a proclamation against the harbouring of deserters. Those found doing so were penalised, whilst twenty shillings per head would be rewarded for the capture of any such soldier or sailor.¹³⁴ Local military companies were raised to guard roads and harbours to prevent the leakage of manpower from Noddles Island.¹³⁵ Furthermore, an Act of the Massachusetts Assembly was amended to punish those harbouring deserters. Those prosecuted would face a £50 fine or twelve months' imprisonment.¹³⁶ The original Act had come into effect on 30 May; suggesting there was some forewarning of British intentions before the arrival of Nicholson. Originally, it stated that the punishment for such offences should amount

¹³⁰ TNA, CO 5/9, Hill's journal, 19 and 23 July 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', pp. 346-347.

¹³¹ TNA, CO 5/9, Hill's journal, 10 and 13 July 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', pp. 344-345; TNA, CO 5/9, Hill to Dartmouth, 31 July 1711.

¹³² Black people had previously served in colonial militia, but such a policy had been abandoned for fear of uprisings. Those that did serve after the mid-seventeenth century usually undertook unarmed roles such as musicians or labourers. Chartrand, René, *Colonial American Troops, 1610-1774*, (Oxford, 2002), I, pp. 23-24. Some prestigious British regiments had black drummers around this time, but this was not a practice widely adopted until later in the century, Fryer, Peter, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*, (London, 1984), pp. 81-85. Even so, at Boston they were filling the places of deserters, suggesting this was perhaps the first time blacks were intended to be used in a military role other than that of musicians.

¹³³ TNA, CO 5/898, King to St John, 25 July 1711.

¹³⁴ TNA, CO 5/865/377, Proclamation of Governor Dudley, 13 July 1711.

¹³⁵ TNA, CO 5/865/385, Proclamation of Dudley, 16 July 1711.

¹³⁶ TNA, CO 5/865/383-384, Act of Massachusetts, 20 July 1711.

to no more than a £20 fine or six months' imprisonment.¹³⁷ The deserters themselves, however, were to avoid punishment, if they so chose, by returning to their units. Hill and Walker issued this declaration out of sheer necessity due to the lack of available and experienced manpower.¹³⁸ Later, when the fleet had departed Boston, Dudley issued a final proclamation calling for the arrest of any deserters found, as they were then clearly unable to provide any service with the expedition. It is interesting to note that this proclamation also stated quite openly that: 'Her Majesty's fleet and forces being sailed this day on the designed expedition against Canada'.¹³⁹ The secret was not just public knowledge, but actively advertised by government proclamation in direct contravention to Dudley's ninth instruction, which emphasised the importance of secrecy. Another proclamation had stated that the expedition was a response to French 'insults' in North America.¹⁴⁰ Obviously, it was too late for the French to prevent the expedition from reaching Quebec, but it would provide those forces that were in Canada with confirmation, allowing them to concentrate on improving their defences and organising their troops.

Conversely, Walker was pleased to hear that a blow against New France had been struck. The *Chester*, which he earlier sent to patrol Placentia, had captured a French ten-gun sloop, the *Neptune* (not to be confused with the transport of the same name), which was transporting thirty extra soldiers for the Quebec garrison.¹⁴¹ However, this news could not make amends for the constant desertion of seamen. Total numbers of deserters are sketchy, but at the fleet's sailing at least eighty-eight

¹³⁷ TNA, CO 5/865/380, notice of assembly, 30 May 1711.

¹³⁸ TNA, CO 5/865/503, Proclamations by Hill and Walker, 21 July 1711.

¹³⁹ TNA, CO 5/865/499, Proclamation by Dudley, 30 July 1711.

¹⁴⁰ TNA, CO 5/865/386, Proclamation by Dudley and Nicholson, 12 June 1711.

¹⁴¹ TNA, SP 42/68, Walker to Burchett, 14 August 1711, also in Walker, 'Journal', introduction, p. 82; Walker, 'Journal', p. 128, 25 July 1711.

sailors had not returned to their posts on the warships alone. Those that had deserted from the transports were not included in this figure, although Walker stated that several of these vessels would not sail because of this exodus. Indeed, the Admiral echoed the concern of the master of the *Rebecca* transport whose crew had absconded with his boat.¹⁴² Other masters had also referred the desertion of their men to Walker with the *Samuel and Anne* and *Queen Anne* losing four and ten men respectively.¹⁴³ This posed a great hindrance as transports were in great demand to take on the additional provincial troops from New England and extra stores. Their crews would number from as little as eight men to around thirty for the larger vessels.¹⁴⁴ Losing even a small number of men, therefore, could represent up to half a ship's crew. This further strained British-colonial relations, as Walker complained to Dudley that not enough was being done to prevent desertion – actively encouraged by the Bostonians – or to promote the recruitment of sailors to man the expedition's auxiliary vessels.

In order to emphasise the seriousness of the situation, Walker declared, for the sake of argument, that if he were to meet Duguay-Trouin (as intelligence captured from the *Neptune* conveniently indicated that Boston may be the privateer's target), he would not be able to face him, being so weakly manned and that he could only blame the colony for this. In response the Massachusetts Council pointed out that they had raised 1,160 troops for the expedition – 160 above their quota – along with 160 sailors and several equipped vessels. The Council pointed out that if the French were to arrive at Boston, such forces would be needed to repel them there as the remaining manpower would be needed to bring in the harvest – the need for which had been

¹⁴² Walker, 'Journal', appendix, p. 228, Walker to Dudley, 29 July 1711.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, appendix, pp. 225-226, Walkup and Tucker to Walker, 28 July 1711.

¹⁴⁴ Estimated from Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail* and various documents in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec'.

exacerbated by the strain in providing for the expedition. Nevertheless, despite these concerns, Hill was allowed these colonial troops as the example of the threat to Boston was considered to be minimal and only employed in the argument to counter Walker's criticism.¹⁴⁵ The Admiral concluded this spat by ungratefully suggesting that the expedition would be better served if the additional 160 Massachusetts troops were sailors instead.¹⁴⁶ The information from the *Neptune* offered various other suggestions for Duguay-Trouin's objective and Walker did not regard him as a threat, but he, nevertheless, prepared to sail as soon as was feasible.¹⁴⁷

These manpower shortages were also exacerbated by sickness, as was often the case with long voyages. Remarkably, the vast majority of the men had arrived in good health, although some 'booths' were erected on islands near Boston for the reception of the sick.¹⁴⁸ Disease afflicted some of the seamen at Boston, but to what extent is unknown; whilst 100 soldiers were in hospital, but all were making a good recovery.¹⁴⁹ Rumours of smallpox on Noddles Island proved unfounded and Hill was relieved to see that provisions were more forthcoming, flooding into camp because of this rumour, which stopped the soldiers visiting Boston: 'Consequently they had not so many opportunities of drinking rum to excess, which had thrown several of them into violent fevers that were now the only distempers which appeared to be in the

¹⁴⁵ Walker, 'Journal', appendix, pp. 223-225, Council and Dudley to Walker, 27 July 1711.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, appendix, pp. 226-227, Walker to Council and Dudley, 28 July 1711.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 129, 25 June 1711.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 104, 27 June 1711.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, appendix, p. 222, Walker to Dudley, 27 July 1711; TNA, CO 5/9, Hill's journal, 10 July 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 344.

hospital.¹⁵⁰ For an early eighteenth-century operation in the Americas, it was a miracle that disease did not have a greater effect.¹⁵¹

Enforcing discipline was not only a problem for Noddle's Island. Walker held a court-martial upon his arrival to deal with the indiscipline of two of his captains on the voyage from England. It was necessary for such a large fleet to be kept intact on a transatlantic passage, so the warships were directed to repeat signals given by Walker in the *Humber* for the benefit of the transports. The tempting sighting of a small French bark on 29 May instigated both Captain Butler of the *Dunkirk* and Captain Soanes of the *Edgar* to ignore their orders to keep formation to engage in the thrill of the chase. This was only a few days before the journey was blighted by fog, which broke up part of the fleet – a period when it was essential for signals to be repeated by the cannon of the warships. The *Edgar* returned the day after parting and before the fleet was immersed in fog. Soanes was consequently fined three months' pay at Boston. Butler, on the other hand did not return to the fleet and was dismissed from his command and discharged from the navy. Ironically the *Dunkirk* arrived at Boston before Walker, although this was obviously because Butler had abandoned the slower transports lost in the fog.¹⁵² In contrast to the strictness shown to deserters and these captains, further courts martial were held in response to overzealous practitioners of discipline. Lieutenant Done of the *Sunderland* received a 'severe and public reprimand' for striking a gunner who was disrespectful towards him, whilst

¹⁵⁰ TNA, CO 5/9, Hill's journal, 4 July 1711; also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 343.

¹⁵¹ The garrison at Annapolis Royal was suffering as many had died or deserted. Walker, 'Journal', appendix, p. 249, L'Hermitt to Pontchartrain, 22 July 1711; Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 371, Governor, Council and Assembly of Massachusetts Bay to the Queen, 17 October 1711.

¹⁵² Library and Archives Canada (hereafter cited as LAC), MG12-ADM1/5268, Court martial record, 26 June 1711; Walker, 'Journal', pp. 98-102, 29 May 1711 and 19, 25, 26 June 1711.

Lieutenant Cole of the *Monmouth* was acquitted for punishing, by whipping, the negligent Midshipman Swanton without notifying his captain.¹⁵³

Whilst some regulars were running away, colonials were being raised. A proclamation was issued on 12 June that an expedition was to take place, so the militia was called out and further troops recruited.¹⁵⁴ The response of Massachusetts was impressive as nearly a quarter of its able men volunteered.¹⁵⁵ Together, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island raised two regiments between them. Samuel Vetch commanded the Massachusetts men, whilst Colonel Walton took charge of the joint New Hampshire-Rhode Island regiment.¹⁵⁶ New Hampshire may have struggled to provide men as half of its militia was guarding its border from Indian raids.¹⁵⁷ 1,160 New England troops joined Hill's battalions for service at Quebec.¹⁵⁸ Despite being the instigator of the strategy and his close involvement with previous operations, Vetch, as governor of Annapolis Royal, was oblivious to the existence of an expedition until June when Walker's fleet arrived at Boston.¹⁵⁹ He hoped that his project, first laid down in 1708, would bear fruit.

Significantly, the Bostonians themselves were eyed with the greatest suspicion by the expedition's officers. Apart from encouraging desertion, they refused to work on Sundays and many were unwilling to offer services for credit. This served to give

¹⁵³ LAC, MG12-ADM1/5268, Court martial record, 20 July 1711.

¹⁵⁴ TNA, CO 5/865/386, Proclamation by Dudley and Nicholson, 12 June 1711.

¹⁵⁵ Ferling, John, 'The New England Soldier: A Study in Changing Perceptions', *American Quarterly*, vol. XXXIII, no. 1 (Spring, 1981), p. 42.

¹⁵⁶ *The Boston News-Letter*, no. 379, 16-23 July 1711, Walker, 'Journal', pp. 128; Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 303, minutes of a council of war, 21 June 1711; Chartrand, *Colonial American Troops*, II, p. 9. Sir Charles Hobby was Deputy Governor of Annapolis Royal and not leading Walton's regiment as suggested in Dalton, Charles, (ed.), *English Army Lists and Commission Registers, 1661-1714*, 6 vols., (London, 1894-1904), VI, p. 293.

¹⁵⁷ Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', pp. 371-372, New Hampshire address to the Queen, 30 October 1711; Chartrand, *Colonial American Troops*, II, p. 15.

¹⁵⁸ Excluding those from Connecticut as they were appointed to be part of Nicholson's command. Walker, 'Journal', appendix, pp. 223-225, Council and Dudley to Walker, 27 July 1711.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 103 and 119, 27 June and 14 July 1711.

an impression that they were deliberately impeding the expedition. The colonial instinct to make a profit narrowed the exchange rate of sterling with Massachusetts bills. The problems of supply and demand led to prices rising fifteen per cent in less than a month, a devalued currency and an urgent requirement for Walker to raise cash so that the expedition could have even the slightest hope of sailing to Quebec.¹⁶⁰

Walker threatened to go elsewhere rather than be charged at such a rate and Belcher resigned from his difficult task.¹⁶¹ These financial woes caused further delay as the colonial authorities with the power to resolve such issues were not scheduled to meet until 18 July. When a council did meet it reversed the exchange rate which furnished Walker with greater purchasing power, although prices had risen anyway owing to demand (and the deliberate hoarding of goods by the colonials to induce this).¹⁶²

The Bostonians seemed more concerned about profit than security, but it must be reiterated how they had been let down by politicians in London over the years on numerous occasions and at great expense to themselves. Walker and Hill were understandably infuriated by the entire situation, although it is fair to say that Dudley and other high-ranking colonial officials did try their utmost to help. Walker seemed exasperated by the efforts he needed to take at Boston. Referring to his time there when he served under Captain St Lo, he thought the slowness with which the Bostonians worked unjustified, especially given that ‘when at London, [I] represented the people of this country with all the advantage I thought due to them, from the

¹⁶⁰ In 1710, £100 bought £155 of Massachusetts paper. The same amount bought only £120 worth with the arrival of the fleet. Waller, *Samuel Vetch*, p. 212; Leach, *Roots of Conflict*, p. 35; Harding, ‘The Expeditions to Quebec’, p. 207.

¹⁶¹ Going elsewhere could not be a serious option and was said in rage, Sewall’s diary, 28 June 1711, *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, p. 317; Walker, ‘Journal’, p. 101, 25 June 1711.

¹⁶² Leach, *Roots of Conflict*, p. 36; Waller, *Samuel Vetch*, p. 213.

knowledge I had of them, when here about twenty-five years since'.¹⁶³ A once favourable impression had significantly altered. The expedition's presence only demonstrated the growing divide between motherland and colony.

V: Pilots

For such an ambitious task, suitable pilots were needed to navigate the St Lawrence effectively – a river that the Royal Navy had never before encountered, let alone charted. Walker's best available chart was *The English Pilot* published in 1706.¹⁶⁴ It did not describe the passage of the St Lawrence and it positioned Quebec incorrectly as it appeared two degrees further south than it actually is.¹⁶⁵ Captain Cyprian Southack was commonly regarded to be the best pilot in New England. He was not utilised upon the expedition, however. The charts that he produced were also inaccurate, as evidenced by his near contemporaries. John Green commented on Southack's *New England Coasting Pilot*: 'this is the first time perhaps that ever a person bred to the sea undertook to make a chart of so great an extent of coast, without ever taking a single latitude; and for the honour of navigators, as well as safety of navigation, I hope it may be the last.' William Douglas echoed Green's sentiments, but was even more scathing: '[Southack's] large chart of the coast of Nova Scotia and New England being one continued error, and a random performance, may be of pernicious consequence in trade and navigation; therefore it ought to be publicly advertised as such and destroyed wherever it is found amongst sea charts.'¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Walker, 'Journal', p. 106, 28 June 1711.

¹⁶⁴ Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 29.

¹⁶⁵ See Map 5. Anon., *The English Pilot. The Fourth Book. Describing the West-India Navigation from Hudson's-Bay to the River Amazonas*, (London, 1706), inserted between pp. 6-7.

¹⁶⁶ LeGear, Clara Egli, Nickelis, John and Martin, George, 'The New England Coasting Pilot of Cyprian Southack', *Imago Mundi*, vol. XI, (1954), p. 141.

More recently, Southack has been described as one who ‘mentions successes and omits failures’.¹⁶⁷ Therefore, if Southack had been allowed to take prime responsibility for the navigation of the St Lawrence, then the fleet certainly could not be guaranteed respite from its dangers. Southack did not chart the river until 1714 in any case.¹⁶⁸

Walker lodged at Southack’s house whilst at Boston, having been advised that he was the best pilot and because he also commanded Massachusetts’s guardship, the ten-gun *Province Galley*. Southack had actually protested at his own suitability for service on the expedition, stating that he had never sailed beyond Sept-Iles in the mouth of the St Lawrence.¹⁶⁹ He also asserted, after meeting him, that Walker’s French pilot from Plymouth was the best man for the job.¹⁷⁰ Additionally, Southack drew up a list of thirteen potential pilots for Nicholson, who were directed to meet with Walker. He had also been tasked with accumulating all available charts and plates of the St Lawrence for Walker to study. Fifty copies of some charts were printed for distribution amongst the fleet.¹⁷¹ Southack was given huge responsibility, receiving his orders even before the arrival of Walker.¹⁷²

Eight of the thirteen pilots were asked to attend Walker, but they were less than enthusiastic about the prospect of sailing to Quebec.¹⁷³ There was some difficulty in tracing several of them. Abraham Miller, for example, could not be

¹⁶⁷ Hitchings, Sinclair, ‘Guarding the New England Coast: The Naval Career of Cyprian Southack’, in Smith, Philip, C. F., (ed.), *Seafaring in Colonial Massachusetts*, Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, no. 52, (Boston, 1980), p. 56.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁶⁹ Unfortunately, Walker only progressed fifty miles beyond this town.

¹⁷⁰ Walker, ‘Journal’, p. 102, 26 June 1711.

¹⁷¹ TNA, CO 5/898/98, Council Secretary Addington to Whitehall, 31 October 1711, also in Graham, ‘The Walker Expedition to Quebec’, p. 374.

¹⁷² TNA, CO 5/898/93, Dudley and Nicholson to Southack and Bonner, 13 June 1711, and Southack report, 2 July 1711.

¹⁷³ TNA, CO 5/898/93-94, Constable of Boston to Council Secretary Addington, 2 July 1711 and Dudley to constables, 9 July 1711.

found by the constable of Charlestown. Such news was concerning to Walker as time was passing and he needed to leave Boston as soon as he could.¹⁷⁴ The qualifications of these pilots were not impressive. Impressed into service on the expedition, they were picked because they were deemed to be 'skilful mariners'. In fact, owing to the dearth of experience of the St Lawrence, the only qualification required was that they must have sailed up and down the river 'at least once'. Captain Gilbert was required to serve because he had commanded a ship which had sailed with Phips in 1690 – twenty-one years previously. Captain Harris was master of the same ship, whilst pilots Carlisle and Jenkins had also been present in 1690. Jeffrey Bedgood was master of a sloop involved with the exchange of prisoners at Quebec in 1705, whilst John Bonner undertook a similar mission in 1706. Hence Bonner was allocated to pilot Walker's ship as his experience was the most recent.¹⁷⁵ Opportunities for New Englanders to sail up the St Lawrence were scarce. Only Phips' expedition and prisoner exchanges afforded the chance as, Vetch aside, trade was not conducted with New France even during peacetime.¹⁷⁶ Evidently most of these pilots had only experienced the river on one occasion, mostly in fairly small vessels. Even those who had sailed with Phips did not face the same challenge as Walker, as he brought significantly larger and more numerous vessels into the river. Indeed, those present on Phips' expedition suffered at the hands of the weather, when their fleet was scattered on their return with some ships lost.

The use of French navigational knowledge was not much better either, as even their many years of experience did not really amount to a working knowledge of the

¹⁷⁴ TNA, CO 5/898/95, Constable of Charlestown to Addington, 13 July 1711; Walker to Dudley, 13 July 1711.

¹⁷⁵ Several reserve pilots were to be aboard the Edgar for the use of any other vessels that may require them. Walker, 'Journal', appendix, p. 199, distribution list of pilots.

¹⁷⁶ TNA, CO 5/898/96-98, Addington to Whitehall, 31 October 1711.

river.¹⁷⁷ The French used inaccurate Dutch maps of the Atlantic that were generally disposed of once the St Lawrence was reached, replaced by charts drawn up by local pilots.¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Walker took into his employ the French sailor he had encountered in Plymouth who had subsequently impressed Southack. Vetch took the opposite opinion of the Frenchman, however, when he complained that he was ‘an ignorant, pretending, idle, drunken fellow’.¹⁷⁹ Walker replied that he ‘never intended to trust him any farther than [he] could throw him’.¹⁸⁰ Another Frenchman, the captain of the captured *Neptune*, was bribed to guide the fleet. He was sent by Hill to accompany Walker as he was deemed competent and knowledgeable of the navigation of the St Lawrence.¹⁸¹ Rumours of his duplicity and involvement in delaying the fleet’s progress are thought to be unfounded, but if, as is believed, the identity of this pilot is a Captain Paradis, then he himself had been wrecked upon the St Lawrence in 1704.¹⁸²

Walker was also concerned with the viability of operating in the St Lawrence in the latter stages of the year when the river freezes. Ice becomes a problem in the autumn. During the nineteenth century, the river was closed, on average, from late November to late April, whilst in May the navigation remained hazardous due to the break-up of ice.¹⁸³ The fog that can descend upon the St Lawrence at any time is often accompanied by rain and easterly winds, which turns into thick snow in October and November. The fog is at its thickest when it is calm and can often lie just above the water, concealing the danger of rocks, whilst a clear view from the vessel can

¹⁷⁷ McLynn, Frank, *1759: The Year Britain Became Master of the World*, (London, 2008), p. 145.

¹⁷⁸ Proulx, *Between France and New France*, pp. 53-54.

¹⁷⁹ Walker, ‘Journal’, p. 132, 3 and 8 August 1711.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 132n, Walker to Vetch, 8 August 1711 (Graham’s note).

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 134, 12 August 1711.

¹⁸² Graham, ‘The Walker Expedition to Quebec’, pp. xv, 28-29.

¹⁸³ Bayfield, H. W., *The St Lawrence Pilot, Comprising Sailing Directions for the Gulf and River*, (fourth edition, London, 1860), I, p. 15.

engender a sense of complacency. Gales and storms are also frequent.¹⁸⁴ The French in 1711 had only recently lost some transport ships on the St Lawrence which were destined for Placentia. Furthermore, Paradis claimed that eight ships were lost on the river in 1710, with many lost each year.¹⁸⁵

There was not much more that Walker could have done to ensure that he possessed the best navigational picture of the St Lawrence. The preparations for creating a suitable pool of experienced pilots had even commenced before his arrival. Governor Dudley had the foresight to secure the services of Captain Southack for the expedition and lodged Walker in his quarters, so that the Admiral was as well prepared for the St Lawrence as possible. Whilst this was a sensible course to take, assembling the pilots was a lengthy process and, given their unenthusiastic response to aiding the fleet, it did not help the speedy dispatch of the expedition. Indeed, Walker was still concerned by mid-July that pilots were not forthcoming. Mindful of the need to acquire local expertise, Walker knew that he could not rely upon those pilots compelled to serve given their sheer inexperience for the task ahead.

VI: Sailing for Quebec

It was decided not to send eighty-gun ships down the St Lawrence as they were thought unfit to sail into the river due to their size. Instead, they would patrol the Bay of St Lawrence to prevent French sloops from reaching Quebec, but also to pass communications on to several British frigates and transports that would follow the main fleet. Walker's flag was, therefore, transferred to the *Edgar*, whilst Hill would

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁸⁵ Walker, 'Journal', appendix, p. 239, intercepted letter of Governor Costa Bella of Placentia to Pontchartrain, 23 July 1711; Lediard, Thomas, *The Naval History of England*, (London, 1735), II, p. 853; TNA, SP 42/68, Walker to St John, 14 August 1711; Walker, 'Journal', pp. 128-129, 25 June 1711.

be carried in the *Windsor*, both vessels of seventy-guns.¹⁸⁶ First they had to find their way. Despite a lack of knowledge of the St Lawrence, Walker did his utmost to ensure the voyage was as safe as possible. An armada of seventy-seven vessels of varying types and sizes departed Boston on 30 July. Such a journey cannot be adequately compared with that of Phips' voyage in 1690, which included less than half the number of Walker's vessels, each being of a much smaller tonnage. The logistical aspect of conveying such a fleet through uncharted and dangerous waters was a daunting one. Walker organised the transports into three divisions, each led by the warships, with the *Humber* and *Devonshire*, the eighty-gunners, taking up their positions to the rear. A place of rendezvous had been identified, if poor weather caused the fleet to fragment, at Spanish River (modern Sydney) on Cape Breton Island. Walker's flagship sailed in the van.¹⁸⁷

The expedition offered the chance to relieve the garrison at Annapolis Royal which had been severely depleted by disease since its capture the previous year.¹⁸⁸ Vetch, as governor, also had a difficult time battling with Indians who had killed some of his troops, whilst many of his marines deserted as they were allegedly 'Irish papists'.¹⁸⁹ Captain Southack was sent to Annapolis Royal to take on the marines and some extra coehoorn mortars for use on the expedition. Two companies of New Englanders were garrisoned in their place, but it is not known if Deputy-Governor Hobby allowed the withdrawal of the marines as he had already refused their

¹⁸⁶ Walker, 'Journal', pp. 107, 134-135, 29 and 30 June, and 14 July 1711.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, appendix, pp. 229-232, account of divisions, 30 July 1711.

¹⁸⁸ Plank, Geoffrey, 'New England and the Conquest', in Reid, John G.; Basque, Maurice; Mancke, Elizabeth; Moody, Barry; Plank, Geoffrey and William Wicken, (eds), *The 'Conquest' of Acadia, 1710: Imperial, Colonial and Aboriginal Constructions*, (Toronto, 2004), p. 77.

¹⁸⁹ *CSPC*, 1710-1711, pp. 552-554, no. 887, Vetch to Dartmouth, 18 June 1711.

deployment with the fleet once before.¹⁹⁰ Meanwhile, the fleet progressed at a steady pace, but sheltered at Gaspé Bay as their approach to the St Lawrence was met by strong winds which risked scattering the fleet. Here they acquired wood and water, and a French fishing vessel was seized by the crew of the *Monmouth* and burnt, along with some small settlements ashore.¹⁹¹

Hill's unease since leaving Boston soon became apparent in a desperate letter that he scribbled to St John. Previously, he had appeared very calm and efficient in the administration of his command. Hill implied that if he failed, then it would be St John's fault for employing a general 'so little capable' and it demonstrated that many on the expedition were Tories: 'all your friends with me are well'. He further stated that all matters for settling government and colony business should be referred to Walker, which would contravene his orders. Of course, Walker already had experience in dealing with difficult colonials. Hill pleaded 'for God's sake let me come home when I have done my business'.¹⁹² Qualms were arising about how he would perform in such a remote and alien environment and were taking their toll. This is not to take away from Hill the fact that he had been a decent, capable and brave commander. It had been less than two years since he had been injured in action at Mons, after suffering the indignity of being made a prisoner in Spain. He probably never wanted to go to Canada, but was the pawn St John needed to gain the Queen's support and it is clear that he was prepared to do his duty. Walker's fears of the approaching season were at the forefront of his mind. There was a distinct possibility

¹⁹⁰ Walker, 'Journal', pp. 130-131, 29-30 July 1711; TNA, SP 42/68, Hill to St John, 31 July 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', pp. 337-338.

¹⁹¹ National Maritime Museum (hereafter cited as NMM), ADM L/M/172, Lieutenant's log *Monmouth*, 19-20 August 1711; Walker 'Journal', pp. 136-137, 18-20 August 1711.

¹⁹² St John's friends probably included Clayton, Disney and King, as well as himself. TNA, SP 42/68, Hill to St John, 12 August 1711.

that the fleet might get stranded at Quebec once the St Lawrence began to ice over. Walker even envisioned a scenario where his ships would have to be hauled onto land in cradles to prevent ice damage.¹⁹³

It was therefore essential that the fleet made good progress and Walker continued his voyage up the St Lawrence. Despite being battered by heavy gales, fog increasingly enveloped the fleet to the point where, lacking precise charts, they were sailing blind.¹⁹⁴ Consequently, the pilots could not be certain of setting a precise course, owing to both the fog and the currents. Equally, there were no soundings to judge the distance from shore (the current and drift would create an inaccurate result and parts of the St Lawrence were too deep).¹⁹⁵ Consequently, they had little choice but to navigate according to pure guesswork. Walker brought the fleet too, facing south, because of the strong winds and currents in an effort to drift mid-course on the river. No danger was detected and it was assumed, accurately, that they were moving closer to the north shore. Setting a slight sail, Walker changed tack to proceed towards the south shore. He retired for the night on 23 August, comfortable in the knowledge of steady progress on an uncharted route, despite the poor visibility and stormy weather. Such actions demonstrate a confidence that his detractors do not normally associate with Walker. Those who were navigating could only judge their position from where they last sighted land and Walker had the concurrence of his flag-captain, George Paddon,¹⁹⁶ his master and the pilots.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ Walker, 'Journal', pp. 136-137, 16-20 August 1711.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 137, 21-23 August 1711; TNA, ADM 51/1073, Captain's journal *Windsor*; TNA, ADM 51/614, Captain's log *Montague*; NMM, ADM/L/M/172, Lieutenant's logs *Monmouth* and *Montague*; TNA, ADM 52/300, Master's log, *Swiftsure*.

¹⁹⁵ Bayfield, *The St Lawrence Pilot*, I, p. 13.

¹⁹⁶ Paddon later commanded a squadron against Morocco, in 1713, to enforce a new treaty with them. Similarly to Walker, he was aware in 1715 that he would be purged by the new administration for his possible Tory sympathies. He consequently fled to Russia and served Peter the Great in the Russian

Just as Walker was retiring to bed, two and a half hours after changing tack, Paddon alerted Walker that he saw the south shore. From the comfort of his cabin, Walker naturally ordered a change of tack in order to head back towards the north shore once again. It was likely that Paddon had in fact sighted the Île aux Œufs (Isle of Eggs) which lay one mile from the north shore. Shortly after, an alarmed Captain Goddard of Seymour's regiment entered Walker's cabin to notify him that they were surrounded by breakers. The Admiral remained calm, trusting his naval officers rather than this soldier: 'I had little regard to what he said, believing it to be the result only of his fear that might make him see danger where there was none'. Goddard was dismissed, but again returned in an agitated state. Walker, hearing a commotion on deck, put on his gown and slippers to investigate. The French pilot had not been on deck, but when he appeared he confirmed to Walker that it was the north shore. Nobody had expected this. Visibility must certainly have been very poor, otherwise the watch officers would have spotted the impending danger sooner. That Walker had not been roused by a sailor is not as inexplicable as has been suggested as surely all hands would have been working to avert disaster, leaving a landsman to act as the messenger.¹⁹⁸

The *Monmouth*, which led the division furthest from the shore, saw the land a mile away in the darkness as the fog cleared and immediately 'contradicted the signal' to change tack and heard the guns of the endangered vessels frantically firing their warning.¹⁹⁹ A simple navigational error due to the fog had combined with opposing

Navy. Warner, Richard H., 'Paddon, George (bap. 1670, d. 1719)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004).

¹⁹⁷ Walker, 'Journal', pp. 137-138, 23 August 1711.

¹⁹⁸ Lediard, *The Naval History of England*, II, p. 854.

¹⁹⁹ NMM, ADM/L/M/172, Lieutenant's log (lieutenants Bower and Boddington) *Monmouth*, 23 August 1711.

currents to push the fleet against their assumed heading. Walker recorded that they were at least forty-five miles further west than was indicated in their logs.²⁰⁰ The confusion over their position can be adequately explained by the fact that the St Lawrence rapidly narrows from approximately seventy to twenty-five miles wide near to the Isle of Eggs, as the north shore sharply juts south. Ships sailing on a direct mid-channel course, therefore, would meet the north shore, which geographically could more accurately be described as the west shore at this point.

Still, Walker managed to regain control of the situation. Paddon, in a panic, had released an anchor before Walker could oppose its deployment. The Admiral ordered the cable cut so that they could sail away from danger to the safety of mid-channel. By morning, the *Edgar* had reached the south shore and was tacking to the north again. Here, Walker learned of the loss of several transports, and also that the *Windsor* and *Montague*, along with some other troopships, had to anchor for the night as they had been caught between the shore and Isle of Eggs. Whilst the fleet had sailed extremely close to the mainland, these islands lying just over a mile from the north shore were the cause of the expedition's demise. The vessels caught amongst the islands faced a constant fight throughout the night against the rocky peril often only yards away. They were in constant fear of hitting the rocks as their anchors could have dragged them onto the islands because of the strong currents. However, owing to the proximity of the islands, they could not cut their cables either because they may have drifted onto them. All they could do was wait for calmer weather and daylight.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ TNA, SP 42/68 and Walker, 'Journal', introduction, p. 87, Walker to Burchett, 12 September 1711.

²⁰¹ Walker, 'Journal', pp. 137-139, 23 August 1711.

Given that the *Edgar*'s records were subsequently lost, the logs from the *Windsor*, Hill's ship, and the *Montague* best serve to confirm Walker's account and give an accurate picture of the night's events, as they were closest to the tragedy. Captains Arris and Walton had recorded that there was a thick fog and strong winds blowing on the night in question. Guns were fired in the fleet every hour to transmit instructions and to try and keep the fleet together. At eleven o'clock in the evening, it became apparent that they were close to the shore and the *Windsor* could not keep its position, necessitating the cutting of cables in order to effect a difficult escape before anchoring again in the hope they would not strike the rocks. At the same time the unfortunate transports were wrecked. The *Montague* was slightly more fortunate, although it too was surrounded by rocks a quarter of a mile from shore. They had anchored in a good place with a decent depth of seven fathoms, whilst smaller ships assisted her throughout the night.²⁰² Logs show that the fleet was plagued by thick fogs since after it set out from Gaspé Bay two days previously.²⁰³ King, also on the *Windsor*, gave a similar account to the logs. He stated that they had travelled forty-five miles westward in the fog and were brought to a halt in fear of meeting the shore. They too were surprised to see the rocks, as they were convinced they were in mid-channel. The *Windsor* could not sail away and had to anchor, riding a storm that suddenly ceased in the early hours. The wind fortunately shifted to the north, allowing them to break their strained cables and sail clear of the rocks. 'All the night

²⁰² TNA, ADM 51/1073, Captain's log *Windsor*; TNA, ADM 51/614, Captain's log *Montague*; NMM, ADM/L/M/172, Lieutenants log *Montague*.

²⁰³ TNA, ADM 51/1073, Captain's log *Windsor*; TNA, ADM 51/614, Captain's log *Montague*; NMM, ADM/L/M/172, Lieutenant's logs *Monmouth* and *Montague*; TNA, ADM 52/300, Master's log, *Swiftsure*.

we heard nothing but ships firing and showing lights as in the utmost distress'.²⁰⁴ It was remarkable that the warships escaped unscathed and that Walker was able to safely guide the rest of the fleet away from imminent peril.

The result was the loss of seven transports carrying soldiers, a storeship and a sutler's sloop from New England. At least 705 officers and men from Seymour's, Windress', Kane's and Clayton's regiments were lost, in addition to thirty-five women.²⁰⁵ Approximately 150 sailors also drowned.²⁰⁶ Colonel Lee, commander of the Rhode Island contingent, reported that children were also amongst the dead.²⁰⁷ These were perhaps drummer boys (twenty-seven drummers were killed) or offspring of the women lost.²⁰⁸ Also, many minors were listed as subalterns in some of the regiments, but may not have actually been present with the expedition due to the usual practices of the period.²⁰⁹ Most of the transports lost were in the right-hand division of the fleet, which is logical, being closest to the north shore; however, the warships experiencing most difficulty were in the central division, as was one transport, the

²⁰⁴ TNA, CO 5/898, King's journal, 23 August 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 330; also described in British Library (hereafter cited as BL), Stowe 246 f. 12, Hughes to Lloyd, to Craggs, 12 September 1711. A New England commissary, describing the disaster on 6 October 1711, said it was 'lamentable to hear the shrieks of the sinking, drowning, departing souls... This will be a bitter pill for New England. The French will now employ their Indians with redoubled rage and malice, to distress and destroy our exposed frontiers', Hutchinson, Thomas, *The history of the province of Massachusetts-Bay*, (Boston, 1767), p. 198n.

²⁰⁵ The *Colchester*, *Nathaniel and Elizabeth*, *Samuel and Anne*, *Marlborough*, *Isabella Anne Katherine*, *Chatham* and the *Smyrna Merchant* were the troopships lost. TNA, CO 5/898, King's account of men and vessels lost; TNA, SP 42/68, 'A Report of the Officers and Soldiers Lost', also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', pp. 333-334. Graham noted that the *John and Sarah* was incorrectly reported as having foundered, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 35, n. 1. The *Content* was the transport victualler and all fifteen of its crew were saved, Walker, 'Journal', p. 140, 24 August 1711.

²⁰⁶ TNA, SP 42/68 and Walker, 'Journal', introduction, p. 87, Walker to Burchett, 12 September 1711. Captain John Lloyd ran ashore where he guessed 1,200 men were lost. This was an exaggerated figure but included 200 sailors, BL, Stowe 246 f. 12, Hughes to Lloyd, to Craggs, 12 September 1711.

²⁰⁷ TNA, CO 5/9/79, Lee to Fox, 12 September 1711; Waller, *Samuel Vetch*, p. 225.

²⁰⁸ TNA, CO 5/898, King's Account of men and vessels lost, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', pp. 333-334. Children were also mentioned in the captain's log of the *Windsor*, TNA, ADM 51/1073.

²⁰⁹ List of officers perished in the St Lawrence and list of minors, Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, VI, pp. 388-390; Scouller, R. E., *The Armies of Queen Anne*, (Oxford, 1966), pp. 78, 277, 337.

Marlborough, which was lost.²¹⁰ However, it might be assumed that the formation of the fleet altered upon entering the foggy St Lawrence. Walker ordered the *Leopard* and two tenders to scan the shore for survivors, where any seamen found were to be put aboard the *Windsor* which was very weakly manned.²¹¹ Almost 500 men were saved from the wrecked transports.²¹²

After a day's recovery Walker tried to find an anchorage but was told Sept-Iles was inappropriate. He felt uncomfortable returning all the way to Gaspé as it was at the very mouth of the river. Walker decided it was necessary to confer with Hill. The General determined that a consultation of the sea officers should be held. In addition, Walker asked for the pilots to attend. Unusually, Walker, as commander of the naval forces, had to go aboard the *Windsor*, Hill's ship, to meet him and hold the consultation. Walker was not concerned about blame for the disaster; however, he was worried that if he proceeded further upriver without his captains' agreement, then if a second catastrophe occurred he would have no 'excuse'. A decision to return was likely when some of the captains relinquished responsibility by saying that they had not previously been consulted, at Boston, about the feasibility of the navigation. Walker's instructions explicitly forbade any other possibility other than to sail for Quebec. The pilots all stated that they were unqualified to safely take the fleet further – which the captains said was well known before they left Boston.²¹³ Walker was slowly losing the support of his squadron to proceed with his instructions. It was

²¹⁰ Walker, 'Journal', appendix, pp. 218, 229-232, disposition of the fleet.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-139, 23 August 1711.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 140, 24 August 1711.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 141-142, 25 August 1711; TNA, CO 5/9, Consultation of the sea officers, 25 August 1711, also in Walker, 'Journal', appendix, pp. 235-237.

decided to abandon the attempt on account that the pilots were ignorant of the river, two admitting that they had only been soldiers, not sailors, on Phips' expedition.²¹⁴

This consultation was Walker's insurance policy for not continuing on to Quebec. It was also one of the greatest errors made by St John. His instructions left little room for operational flexibility. The secrecy surrounding his project meant no professional advice was taken about the feasibility of the navigation of the St Lawrence. Pilots and expert navigators, or cartographers, should have been appointed to aid Walker from the beginning, with the Admiralty assisting in this critical matter. It was Dudley who attempted to find proper pilots for Walker, but those that were found were not considered to fully understand the river and the decision to abandon the attack on Quebec was unanimous.²¹⁵ Walker set a course to rendezvous at either Gaspé or Spanish River.²¹⁶ Meanwhile, in Britain during the week of the disaster, *The Evening Post* reported that Walker and Hill were sailing up the 'Quebec' river and Nicholson was marching by land to Quebec, with a wildly exaggerated force of 4,000 'English inhabitants' and 8,000 Indians.²¹⁷

VII: Nicholson's Expedition

Nicholson was not, of course, immediately aware of what had happened on the St Lawrence. His march to Montreal, combined with the planned simultaneous assault on Quebec, would have held New France in a pincer movement, although its prime

²¹⁴ TNA, SP 42/68, Consultation conclusions, 25 August 1711; Consultation of the sea officers, 25 August 1711, also in Walker, 'Journal', appendix, pp. 235-237.

²¹⁵ Walker, 'Journal', p. 110, 1 July 1711.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142, 25 August 1711.

²¹⁷ *The Evening Post*, 23-25 August 1711, issue 318; *The Dublin Gazette*, 1-4 September 1711, issue 665.

aim was to prevent reinforcements from strengthening Quebec. The instructions were again specific. Nicholson was to march via Lake Champlain and after

reducing Chambly and Sorel²¹⁸ get in the River Canada [St Lawrence], about the time our squadron and forces shall arrive at Quebec, in order to intercept any assistance that place may expect from Trois-Rivieres or Montreal, which place being only [defended by a palisade] may be taken sword in hand, [or] at least blocked up until the affair of Quebec is determined.²¹⁹

Even if they found Montreal to be lightly defended, this was an arduous task for the invaders given the route they would take and the logistical complexities it would involve. With Walker's retreat, there was no support and supply lines would have been overly extended. Montreal did not boast great defensive works (it was protected by a wooden palisade and a wooden fort), however, there were approximately thirty small forts controlling the approaches to the city; some were primitive and built of wood, others of stone.²²⁰ The frustrating order to retreat saved Nicholson's men from annihilation as they would have stumbled into a superior French force and were already succumbing to disease.²²¹

The *Mary* storeship (not to be confused with the ship stranded in Ireland) detached from Walker's fleet with the *Kingston* on 22 May, carried uniforms, artillery

²¹⁸ These were forts on the approach to Montreal. Fort Chambly had only just been rebuilt in stone in 1711, Chartrand, René, *The Forts of New France in Northeast America, 1600-1763*, (Oxford; New York, 2008), p. 29.

²¹⁹ TNA, SP 44/213, Hunter's instructions no. 8, 6 February 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 273.

²²⁰ Chartrand, René, *French Fortresses in North America 1535-1763: Québec, Montréal, Louisbourg and New Orleans*, (Oxford; New York, 2005), pp. 35, 37-39.

²²¹ Morgan, William Thomas, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711', *Bulletin of the Departments of History and Political and Economic Science in Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario, Canada*, no. 56, (May 1928), p. 29.

and miscellaneous stores for the land expedition'.²²² Due to fog and contrary winds and currents, it did not arrive at New York until 12 July, but the *Mary* also ran aground in the bay delaying it further.²²³ The good news was that the *Joseph* and *Neptune* transports carrying the ordnance supplies and the thirty lieutenants, which Nicholson left at Boston, had finally arrived on 11 July.²²⁴ These were the transports St John had organised first, so that they could reach New York as early as March, yet they docked over two weeks after Walker's arrival at Boston.

Benjamin Ashe of New York noted Nicholson's arrival and even that of Walker's fleet, as well as its composition. If he knew of this then the Quebecois certainly did. Ashe reported that 150 cedar wood flat-bottomed boats were being built in New York, each capable of holding about twenty men. They were expected to be ready around 18 June, whilst more were being built at Albany.²²⁵ It would have been clear, combined with the sudden raising of troops, what their purpose was and Ashe wished the expedition great success. Nicholson's army consisted of approximately 2,300 men, including British regulars of the independent companies based in New York, and around 800 Indians of the Five Nations of the Iroquois.²²⁶ Of the colonials,

²²² Walker, 'Journal', p. 98, 22 May 1711 and appendix, p. 179, list of transports; TNA, CO 5/898, King's journal, 21 May 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 318.

²²³ TNA, CO 5/898, King's journal, 17 July 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', pp. 324; TNA, CO 5/9, Hill's journal, 13 July 1711; also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 346; Walker, 'Journal', appendix, p. 210, Hunter to Walker, 14 July 1711.

²²⁴ Walker, 'Journal', appendix, pp. 203-204, Hunter to Walker, 12 July 1711.

²²⁵ The Bodleian Library, Oxford (hereafter cited as BLO), Clarendon MSS, vol.102/210, Ashe to an unknown recipient, 6 July 1711. These boats may have been for Hill and Walker as Hunter was building 330 batteaux at Albany, each of which could carry six men and their provisions, *CSPC*, 1711-1712, pp. 100-104, no. 96, Hunter to [St John?], 12 September 1711.

²²⁶ The quotas were: New York 600; Connecticut 360; East and West Jersey 180 each and Pennsylvania 240. TNA, CO 5/898/33 and *CSPC*, 1710-1711, pp. 556-560, no. 893, minutes of a council of war, 21 June 1711, also Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', pp. 302-307; *ibid.*, p. 308, Dudley to St John, 11 July 1711; Osgood, *The American Colonies*, I, p. 442. However, Hunter to Board of Trade 17 August 1711, Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 310, stated that the Pennsylvania troops did not arrive which conforms with their Quaker principles, whilst the other colonies were just short of their quotas but fully supplied. Hunter makes clear the Indian contribution was 800. Morgan, William Thomas, 'The Five Nations and Queen Anne', *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. XIII,

300 were Palatines, possibly volunteering through economic necessity.²²⁷ The troops were distributed into three regiments plus the Indian contingent. Colonel Ingoldesby's consisted of 600 men, including the regulars from New York which, due to a number of invalids being amongst their ranks, had to be made up by 100 Palatines and around 200 men raised in the Jerseys. Schuyler's regiment of 550 men included provincials raised in New York, ninety Long Island and Connecticut Indians ('these sea-coast Indians being of great use for managing batteaux and canoes and all other hard labour') and the remaining 200 Palatines. The 360 men raised in Connecticut – the only colony to meet its quota for Nicholson's force – formed Colonel Whiteing's regiment.²²⁸

Part of this landward colonial thrust was planned to split from Nicholson to carry out another mission. Major Livingston, who visited Quebec after taking Port Royal, was to be sent with 100 provincials and 300 Indians to reconnoitre and act as a forward unit to prevent the juncture at Quebec of all of New France's troops. He was also entrusted to carry a 'manifesto' to distribute amongst the people of New France 'to incline them with more ease to submit themselves to the Queen'.²²⁹ Once that was completed he was to conceal himself, and his small number of Indian companions, in the woods around Quebec to gain intelligence, which would be disseminated to Hill

no.2. (September, 1926), p. 187, n. 80, indicates a dispute in Indian numbers where there were said to be over 1,000, however, the Reverend Buckingham estimated there to be around 600 in camp, although more may have been scouting elsewhere, Acorn Club, *Roll and Journal of Connecticut Service in Queen Anne's War, 1710-1711*, The Acorn Club, Thirteenth publication, (New Haven, 1916) (hereafter cited as Buckingham, 'Diary'), p. 34, 1 September 1711. The regulars were the northern American colonies garrison which theoretically consisted of four companies of 100 men, two at New York and two at Albany, Chartrand, *Colonial American Troops*, I, p. 13. Of course the thirty lieutenants would also be included in this force.

²²⁷ Black, *Crisis of Empire*, p. 36; Dickinson, H. T., 'The Poor Palatines and the Parties', *The English Historical Review*, vol. LXXXII, no. 324 (July, 1967), p. 482; *CSPC*, 1711-1712, p. 194, no. 251, Hunter to the council, 1 January 1712; Morgan, 'The Five Nations and Queen Anne', p. 187, correctly asserted that the Palatines and Indians made up approximately half of the army.

²²⁸ *CSPC*, 1711-1712, pp. 100-104, no. 96, Hunter to [St John?], 12 September 1711.

²²⁹ Walker, 'Journal', pp. 112, 115, 6-7 July 1711; TNA, CO 5/898/21, *Manifesto*.

upon the arrival of the fleet. King remarked that ‘these 400 men can alarm the country as well as 4,000’ although Walker stated he was only to take ‘two or three’ Indians.²³⁰ Livingston was already familiar with the territory, and also the task, as he had married the daughter of Major-General Winthrop who led the overland expedition in 1690.²³¹ Preparations for the 2,300 men took a substantial amount of time as Nicholson did not leave Albany until the end of August – after Walker had abandoned the Quebec expedition.

Fortunately, the diary of Reverend Thomas Buckingham survives to relate the experiences of Nicholson’s expedition.²³² Whilst he only travelled with the Connecticut companies and did not receive any personal insights from Nicholson or his headquarters, Buckingham offers an account of the expedition from the viewpoint of the infantry. His account reveals an impressive organisational capability on the part of the colonials in their difficult journey north. This industriousness was unfortunately wasted as news arrived of the mishap in the St Lawrence. Nevertheless, this expedition serves to illustrate the growing confidence and abilities of the Americans. Buckingham’s diary describes the activities of the Connecticut forces raised for the expedition and their journey as far as Fort Nicholson, from where they retreated. This would have been familiar territory to many British, French and indigenous forces fighting during the Seven Years War. Later in the century, the area would see particularly ferocious fighting when many more British and French forts

²³⁰ TNA, CO 5/898, King to St John, 25 July 1711; Buckingham’s ‘Diary’ describes Livingston as a lieutenant-colonel, and also says that he was often in camp, although he did scout ahead occasionally, pp. 31, 37-38 and 42, 9 August, 13-15 and 28 September 1711; Walker, ‘Journal’, p. 115, 7 July 1711; Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, VI, p. 288, states he raised a company of Indian scouts as a major at Annapolis Royal.

²³¹ Krugler, John David, ‘Livingston, John (1680-1719/20)’, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (II, 1701-1740).

²³² When Buckingham’s ‘Diary’ was originally published, the editor confused his first name, calling him John. See, Thompson, Parker, C., *From its European Antecedents to 1791: The United States Army Chaplaincy*, (Honolulu, 2004), p. 51, n. 36.

were established and would see the innovative use of irregular forces such as Roger's Rangers.²³³ Isolated, and being true wilderness, the area would lead to the development of new types of warfare suited to the woodland environment half a world away from the regimented structure of European battlefields.

Nicholson would not get the opportunity to fight here, however. It was as well that he did not, as the season was very late in the year when they headed out into the wilderness. It was 28 August before the Connecticut companies had even left their rendezvous point at Albany in the colony of New York.²³⁴ At this point Walker was already contemplating what to do next, having abandoned the attempt on Quebec.²³⁵ It was risky that Nicholson was even prepared to proceed with the expedition at such a late stage in the year. Marlborough's siege at Bouchain had been successfully concluded in mid-September allowing the armies of Flanders to enter into winter quarters.²³⁶ The Canadian weather would soon become much harsher than the milder climate of Europe. If any tragedy were to occur, be it through sickness, extended lines of communication, or even military defeat, the impending weather conditions could only hamper and decimate such a small force, as escaping the clutches of the climate would not be a quick process. After the aborted expedition Buckingham did not return to Albany until 1 October. It was thanks to the good organisation of this hardy force of colonials that he was able to make this journey through wilderness in only eleven days. It would still take him another eleven, however, for Buckingham to return to his native Connecticut to be reunited with his family.²³⁷

²³³ Chartrand, *The Forts of New France*; McLynn, 1759, chapter 10 *passim*.

²³⁴ Buckingham, 'Diary', p. 33, 28 August 1711.

²³⁵ Walker, 'Journal', p. 143, 27 August-2 September 1711.

²³⁶ Chandler, John, *Marlborough as Military Commander*, (London, 2000), p. 298; TNA, SP 44/111, St John to Erle, 11 September 1711.

²³⁷ Buckingham, 'Diary', p. 43, 1 and 12 October 1711.

Nicholson did not even travel halfway from Albany to Montreal. It took over one month to complete his seventy mile advance, establishing supply depots, sending out scouting parties, and maintaining camp sites. All of this was done in relative safety from French and Indian attack. Progressing further required increasing caution as they had started to meet Indian tribes allied with the French at Lake George. Small French scouting parties were also believed to have been in the area, searching out Nicholson as many of his men fell sick. With the onset of winter and the crossing into enemy territory, sickness could only have become increasingly prevalent. Assuming the march progressed well, and forts Chambly and Sorel neutralised, then it was likely that Nicholson would have been in a position to attack Montreal in November. The colonials would have expected to face extremely cold temperatures. If the operation had progressed badly then their supply lines would have stretched back over 200 miles, through wilderness infested by combative enemies, which is why it was important that Nicholson built forts along his route to Canada.

Buckingham's diary, from which the following narrative is derived, details his selection of sermons, all of which were inspired by the Old Testament, whilst his preaching was Calvinistic.²³⁸ He took seriously the need to enforce camp discipline for the benefit of the mission. However, the Chaplain did not travel into the wilderness without carrying a few home comforts, such as an assortment of clay pipes, which were 'apt to break', a powder horn 'with the union flag cut out upon it', and some silk handkerchiefs.²³⁹ For Buckingham, travelling from his home town of New Haven on the Connecticut coast to the rendezvous point at Albany was a feat in itself. Having set out on 10 August, the companies he joined had to march over 100

²³⁸ Thompson, *The United States Army Chaplaincy*, p. 37.

²³⁹ Thompson, *The United States Army Chaplaincy*, p. 36; Buckingham, 'Diary', pp. 29-30, 8 August 1711.

miles to rendezvous there.²⁴⁰ They may have worn the red coats supplied by Britain and one company was composed of elite grenadiers.²⁴¹ During that time the Chaplain's horse fell, trapping his left leg. Thankfully, Buckingham was not hurt and he was able to carry on recording the expedition in his diary. His first expedition sermon was taken from Psalm 20:3, which refers to offerings and sacrifice – preparing his men for their service against New France. Despite bringing along good quality clothing, Buckingham was issued with a 'regimental suit' and a fusil from a commissary at Albany. The Connecticut companies were there on 23 August – the date of the St Lawrence tragedy.²⁴²

Whilst at Albany, Buckingham took the opportunity to buy essential supplies of chocolate, gingerbread and pipes, as 'leaky' bateaux delayed the advance of some of the troops. About 400 Indians entered Albany when three companies, along with cattle drivers, were sent upriver, launching the expedition.²⁴³ This was the beginning of a complex series of logistical exercises, whereby companies would be sent to establish strong points along the Hudson which could then be used as camping grounds and supply depots for the main body of troops, which was reminiscent of Marlborough's march to the Danube in 1704. So as not to strain the system by overloading the roads and rivers, those in the vanguard reconnoitred a forward area, whilst following companies would take advantage of the good work achieved by their comrades to make their journey as efficient as possible. These preparations had not gone unnoticed in Quebec as an Onondaga (a Five Nations tribe) spy passed on

²⁴⁰ Buckingham, 'Diary', pp. 31-32, 10-17 August 1711.

²⁴¹ Chartrand, *Colonial American Troops*, II, p. 21.

²⁴² *King James Bible*, Psalm 20:3; Buckingham, 'Diary', pp. 31-32, 14-23 August 1711.

²⁴³ Buckingham, 'Diary', pp. 32-33, 23-25 August 1711. Captains Crane's, Wood's and Dimond's companies went.

information to Vaudreuil.²⁴⁴ Buckingham's duties were resumed on Sunday 26 August at Albany, when he instilled a sense of discipline into the minds of the men with a sermon from Isaiah about the fruits of innocence and the consequences for the guilty.²⁴⁵

It was not until 28 August that Buckingham and the Connecticut men, under Colonel Whiting, left Albany. Their next stop was twenty miles upriver, where Buckingham suspected that the small group of Indians he had seen enter their camp were planning on securing some Canadian prisoners, whilst waiting for repairs to their bateaux. On the last day of August, his spirits were lifted with the arrival into camp of General Nicholson himself. After a triple huzza was given, the camp swelled in number with the arrival of 600 Indians. Some scouts and men left to drive cattle to Saratoga, indicating that the next move upriver would follow shortly. However, danger lurked nearby as a captain standing next to the Hudson River was only yards from where a bullet struck. The next day the Iroquois were in a 'running fire' across the river, presumably with enemy scouts, when a soldier from Ingoldsby's regiment was hit in the shoulder.²⁴⁶

On a rainy Sunday 2 September, Buckingham preached from Proverbs 14:9 about fools mocking sin and the righteous receiving favour. Perhaps the righteous would receive New France. The men of Connecticut arrived at Saratoga the following day.²⁴⁷ Work continued with the building of camps and the securing of provisions and arms. Some bateaux had to be carried inland, on carriages and on men's shoulders, as the Hudson curved away and the army had to cross overland towards Lake George to

²⁴⁴ Hutchinson, *The history of the province of Massachusetts-Bay*, p. 195.

²⁴⁵ Buckingham, 'Diary', p. 33, 26 August 1711; *King James Bible*, Isaiah 3:10-11.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 34, 1 September 1711.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 34, 2-3 September 1711; *King James Bible*, Proverbs 14:9.

continue onwards to Lake Champlain. At Fort Nicholson, Buckingham told of the first death from disease of a New Jersey soldier, likely to be the one wounded in the shoulder.²⁴⁸ On 8 September, the difficult part of continuing the journey was evidenced as some Connecticut men were detailed to help clear the way overland to Wood Creek.²⁴⁹ In doing so, enemy tracks were spotted although no further evidence of their presence was found.²⁵⁰ It was at Wood Creek in August 1690 where Winthrop retreated, one reason being that birch bark was then unsuitable for building canoes – a natural indication of the lateness of the season.²⁵¹

Buckingham's fourth Sunday was his busiest. The Chaplain preached in both the morning and the afternoon from two different texts at Fort Nicholson. He began with Exodus, which was, perhaps, indicative of their journey through the wilderness terrain, for the passage in question referred to God blessing their bread and water, and purging sickness, and states that nothing shall be barren in their land.²⁵² Sickness may have been spreading making this lesson both comforting and appropriate. His later sermon, from Deuteronomy, may have given a nod to discipline once again, as it was about walking in the path of the Lord and not turning from it.²⁵³ That path was taken up by Schuyler's regiment the next day as he marched out of camp, along with some Indians and over thirty wagons – some of which carried around twenty bateaux.

²⁴⁸ This was the only death in Nicholson's force until at least 19 September, *The Daily Courant*, 29 December 1711, issue 3186.

²⁴⁹ Wood Creek was identified by Vetch as the place to establish a store house for the intended 1709 expedition, BLO, Clarendon MSS Vol.102/201-204, Vetch to Lovelace, 30 April 1709. Fort Nicholson (later Fort Edward), was an important strategic point at the 'great carrying place' where soldiers and supplies were landed to journey overland to Lake Champlain, Stoetzel, Donald I., *Encyclopedia of the French and Indian War in North America, 1754-1763*, (Westminster, MD, 2008), p. 135.

²⁵⁰ Buckingham, 'Diary', p, 35, 8 September 1711.

²⁵¹ McLay, K. A. J., 'Wellsprings of a 'World War': An Early English Attempt to Conquer Canada during King William's War, 1688-97', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. XXXIV, no. 2, (June 2006), p. 164.

²⁵² *King James Bible*, Exodus 23:25-26.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, Deuteronomy 5:32-33.

Buckingham records that these wagons were guarded by Palatines²⁵⁴ and New England troops. Whilst they marched out, others marched into camp, as Nicholson and some irregulars arrived.²⁵⁵ On 11 September, more wagons departed to mend roads around Wood Creek. In the camp, Nicholson ordered that no communication should be held between soldiers and the native forces, reinforcing the suspicious view of the colonials towards the Indians that was not in evidence amongst the French.²⁵⁶

A scout had deserted to the enemy and camp discipline was exposed to be a problem as several men were described as being tied 'neck-and-heels' for going into the Indian camp, against Nicholson's orders.²⁵⁷ An exasperated Buckingham remarked: 'the camp laws were again read to our people; and oh! that they were duly and impartially executed'.²⁵⁸ Buckingham intermittently implied that camp discipline was not what it should have been, giving explanation to his choice of sermons.

Whilst Buckingham remained at Fort Nicholson, stores were continually being sent to Wood Creek and the presence of the enemy was posing challenges. Eighty Indians and six Palatines were sent to find an enemy force of about twenty whose tracks had been discovered ten miles from camp.²⁵⁹ Buckingham's next sermon from Proverbs 18:10, given on Sunday, 16 September, about the Lord being a 'strong tower' which the righteous can enter, may have referred to their fort, or those they

²⁵⁴ Buckingham instead refers to the Palatines as 'Dutch'.

²⁵⁵ Buckingham, 'Diary', p. 36, 10 September 1711.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37, 11 September 1711.

²⁵⁷ Walker's attitude to the natives was not as stuffy. He was impressed by the Mohawks that he had met at Boston and thought they were a great resource that should be engaged fully by the colonies, Walker, 'Journal', p. 128, 24 July 1711. He flatteringly described them as possessing: 'gravity and sagacity, and to me they seemed to be a people of thought and understanding, sincere and void of levity'. Walker had invited Mohawks and Connecticut tribes aboard his ship and entertained them with wine, music and the dancing of his sailors. They 'then entertained us in their way of dancing, which was a very different manner to anything ever seen in Europe, for each in his turn sung a song and danced, while the rest sat down and hummed and [howled] at distinct periods of his dance, with a tone very odd and loud, but yet in time', *Ibid.*, p. 125, 23 July 1711.

²⁵⁸ Buckingham, 'Diary', p. 37, 12 September 1711.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38, 14 September 1711.

were planning on taking from the French. Tumultuous events followed in camp as an Indian mortally wounded a Connecticut man with a knife and begged to be pardoned by Nicholson. Useful intelligence was recovered the same day by Indians tracking an enemy force. They found the remains of an Indian shoe in a bush along with a paper which stated that 171 Indians, nine Frenchmen and two officers were in the area, and gave details of where they were patrolling.²⁶⁰ If true, then this was a sizeable contingent to monitor the preparations of the colonial force. It could, of course, have been a well placed deception to entice Nicholson into an ambush, but it is certain that enemies were concentrating around the invaders.²⁶¹ It was evident from the skill of the Indian trackers that colonial warfare was already adapting to the local conditions.

The death toll increased as disease claimed a victim. Buckingham noted that Sergeant Hall of a Connecticut company was buried after a triple discharge by several files of musketeers.²⁶² This death was clearly more personal to Buckingham because of his connection with this unit. It was described in detail in contrast to the noting of the anonymous death of the Jersey man ten days before. Several Palatines entered the camp on the following day, reporting that one of their number had been snatched by six Indians. One Hundred Indians and ten 'Christians' were sent to Crown Point where it was thought the French were entrenching themselves, whilst stores were still being moved up to Wood Creek.²⁶³

That evening, Buckingham recorded an unusual episode where Mr Sharp, the chaplain to the regulars, seemingly deserted in a canoe. This was poor timing as it was the very next day, 19 September, when news of the disaster on the St Lawrence

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38, 16 September 1711; *King James Bible*, Proverbs 18:10.

²⁶¹ Leach, D. E., *Arms for Empire: A Military History of the British Colonies in North America, 1607-1763*, (New York, 1973), p. 150.

²⁶² Buckingham, 'Diary', pp. 38-39, 17 September 1711.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 39, 18 September 1711.

was received. The *Sapphire* had been dispatched to Boston to inform the colonials of what had occurred in the St Lawrence and to recall Nicholson from proceeding against Montreal.²⁶⁴ Nicholson was then at Fort Anne, which he had built at Wood Creek in 1709 with a wooden palisade. This was set alight, along with Fort Nicholson, as the retreat began to prevent the French from occupying it. Nicholson was described as being ‘so enraged, that he endeavoured to tear his wig, but it being too strong for him, he flung it to the ground, and trampled on it, crying out “roguery, treachery.”’²⁶⁵ Buckingham too, was obviously disappointed, but he was also resigned to what had occurred: ‘An awful frown on New England in particular, and the poor captives in the land of our anti-Christian and pagan enemies. Oh, what will those say; how will they triumph and blaspheme, reproach and deride! But God governs.’²⁶⁶ He was clearly worried about how New France would react, particularly concerning the fate of prisoners. Buckingham’s comments also sum up the religious divide in North America.

Various elements of Nicholson’s force turned back to Albany the next day and it was reported that two Indians had been taken, as well as two redcoats guarding stores (although all of the beer and rum was missing too).²⁶⁷ Buckingham’s disappointment had not abated, however, as he remarked that it was, ‘a melancholy thing to be turned back – but God is righteous in all his ways’.²⁶⁸ It was fortunate that they halted their advance and retreated. Upon hearing of the fleet’s calamity Vaudreuil ordered all of his available forces to attack Nicholson, who would have

²⁶⁴ Walker, ‘Journal’, p. 142, 26 August 1711.

²⁶⁵ Kalm, Pehr, *Travels into North America*, (London, 1772), II, pp. 134-135; Stoetzel, Donald I., *Encyclopedia of the French and Indian War in North America, 1754-1763*, (Westminster, MD, 2008), p. 11.

²⁶⁶ Buckingham, ‘Diary’, pp. 39-40, 19 September 1711.

²⁶⁷ The fact he referred to redcoats may suggest that they were royal troops, despite the issuing of uniforms to the colonies, *ibid.*, pp. 40-41, 20 September 1711.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41, 21 September 1711.

been outnumbered.²⁶⁹ Had Nicholson persisted in the attack, the outcome would have represented an even greater disaster for the colonies than that presented by the accident on the *St Lawrence*.

On Buckingham's return, his final sermon was preached from Leviticus about the priest burning all on the altar for his sacrifice, which was very apt given the circumstances.²⁷⁰ The days following were unremarkable, other than a militiaman and an Indian dying before their return to Albany on 1 October. Orders for a general muster were given and then Nicholson, perhaps feeling some guilt knowing that his men had laboured for nothing, organised a competition in shooting, running and wrestling, where each winning company would receive a guinea. Buckingham was justifiably proud that Captain Crane's Connecticut company won both the shooting and the running as he does not mention the victors of the wrestling. He eventually arrived back at his home in New Haven on 12 October.²⁷¹

Buckingham's short account provides a useful insight into the expedition. He was not involved with the organisation and he was never at the front; indeed, he did not even proceed as far as Wood Creek. However, his observations gave a broad perspective on how these operations were conducted. He was only attached to a small proportion of the force, probably a company, although they were affected by a couple of deaths after a relatively short journey. Nothing really came of the expedition, the colonial authorities had wasted both time and money, but they showed remarkable zeal in their task and were obviously frustrated at not being able to carry out their mission – especially after all of their efforts establishing bases, planning logistics and providing transport. The relations with the Five Nations were hampered by this

²⁶⁹ Hutchinson, *The history of the province of Massachusetts-Bay*, p. 195.

²⁷⁰ Buckingham, 'Diary', p. 41, 25 September 1711; *King James Bible*, Leviticus 1:9, 17.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 43, 4 and 12 October 1711.

failure and it can be seen why most Indian tribes favoured cooperation with the French, especially as segregation was imposed in the camp at Fort Nicholson.²⁷²

VIII: The Loss of the *Feversham*

Tragedy was not only confined to the St Lawrence River as it also trickled into the stormy waters off the north Atlantic coastline of Acadia. On 7 October, after both expeditions had retreated, the *Feversham* frigate and the three transports it was escorting foundered on the rocks of Cape Breton Island only half a day's sailing from Spanish River, where Walker's fleet took shelter only a month before.²⁷³ The ships had been *en route* to Quebec laden with provisions in anticipation of success for Hill's land contingent. The *Feversham* had been delayed because it had been seriously undermanned due to sickness, death and desertion. Its voyage stemmed from the Boston resupply debacle which could not provide the large quantities that the expedition needed, necessitating additional victuals to be gathered at New York in case the fleet needed to winter at Quebec. The transports carried supplies from Virginia and Maryland, particularly salted pork.²⁷⁴ Their cargo was vital to the sustenance of a garrison at Quebec over the winter months and it was imperative that it arrived in the St Lawrence in October, before ice made the route impassable.²⁷⁵

The wrecked transports were the *Mary*, *Joseph*, and *Neptune*, being the same transports that earlier sailed to New York.²⁷⁶ Losses on the *Feversham* were

²⁷² Leach, *Arms for Empire*, p. 154.

²⁷³ O'Callaghan, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, V, pp. 284-285, Hunter to Dartmouth, 12 November 1711, also Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 375.

²⁷⁴ Also, bread, flower, butter, peas, rum and tobacco, *CSPC*, 1711-1712, pp. 100-104, no. 96, Hunter to [St John?], 12 September 1711; Charnock, John, *Biographia Navalis*, IV, p. 14.

²⁷⁵ Harding, 'The Expeditions to Quebec', p. 209.

²⁷⁶ In his index in 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 435, Graham mistakenly states that the *Mary* under Cheeseman Percy was the transport that sank. This was not the case, as it sailed with the

considerable – of the 140-150 sailors aboard, only forty-nine were saved. Captain Paston perished, as did the master and five of the *Neptune*'s crew. Both crews of the *Mary* and *Joseph* survived.²⁷⁷ Whether a knowledgeable pilot was obtained for the *Feversham* is unknown, as Abraham Miller, assigned to the role, was one of the pilots who could not be found at Boston.²⁷⁸ It can be assumed, however, that the crew were fairly experienced in this theatre, as they had been based on the American station for two years.²⁷⁹ Unfortunately, Paston had not been intercepted by the *Montague*, which carried orders to alert any vessels due to rendezvous with the fleet that the expedition had been cancelled.²⁸⁰ It was also unfortunate that the *Feversham* was lost in such a manner, as it participated in the only real success of British arms in the Canadian theatre. It was stationed at New York and had joined the small squadron under Commodore Martin in 1710 which assisted in the reduction of Port Royal.²⁸¹

Paston was posthumously acquitted for the loss of the *Feversham* by a court-martial. The loss was attributed to a mistake in the judgement of the pilot and to the strong current.²⁸² Gunner John Knox's testimony described stormy winds and strong currents being responsible for the incident. Of the transports, one ship 'broke and the

transports carrying King's train. The *Mary* (master, Thomas Lewis), which sailed into New York with the *Kingston*, was the ship which suffered this unfortunate fate.

²⁷⁷ LAC, MG12-ADM1/5269, John Knox, 7 October 1711; 102 died and forty-eight survived according to O'Callaghan, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, V, pp. 284-285, Hunter to Dartmouth, 12 November 1711, also Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 375; ninety died and forty-five were saved according to Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, p. 178.

²⁷⁸ A pilot probably would have boarded from another vessel only once the *Feversham* arrived at Cape Breton Island. TNA, CO 5/898/95-96, various letters, 2-3 July 1711; Walker, 'Journal', appendix, pp. 198-200, pilot distribution letters.

²⁷⁹ TNA, SP 42/68, Walker to Burchett, 22 May 1711; also Walker, 'Journal', introduction, p. 83; Charnock, *Biographia Navalis*, IV, p. 14.

²⁸⁰ Walker, 'Journal', p. 142, 26 August 1711.

²⁸¹ Almon, John, *A New Military Dictionary: or, The field of war...*, (London, 1760), under heading of *Annapolis Royal*; Burchett, *A Complete History of the Most Remarkable Transactions at Sea*, (London, 1720), p. 766; Graham, Gerald S., *Empire of the North Atlantic: The Maritime Struggle for North America*, (second edition, Toronto and London, 1958), p. 91.

²⁸² LAC, MG12-ADM1/5269, Court-martial, 6 May 1712.

rest bilged'.²⁸³ The *Joseph* and *Neptune* were both included in a valuation list of all vessels lost on the expedition, possibly for insurance purposes, but the *Mary* was notably absent.²⁸⁴

Another account of the foundering of these vessels was given by Nicholas Savers, a young mariner aboard the *Neptune*. Arriving at New York, Savers said that the ship had lain at anchor for six weeks when Hunter and Paston ordered Captain Rouse to fit the *Neptune* with provisions for a voyage to Canada. Rouse refused, reasoning that the ship's owners in London would not agree to this and that it was too late in the season to sail into those waters where Walker's fleet was then located. Savers described how they then threatened to commandeer the ship. The *Neptune* therefore sailed without a pilot, following the *Feversham*, when both struck rocks off Cape Breton Island. Four of its nine crewmembers survived.²⁸⁵ Unfortunately, the ocean surrounding Cape Breton Island shared in the notoriety gained by the St Lawrence. The foundering of the four vessels here does not demonstrate any deficiency in seamanship. It simply illustrates the enormous challenges faced by early eighteenth-century navigation.

IX: Quebec

Such was the scale of mutual distrust between the British and the New Englanders that when the French gained intelligence of Walker's fleet heading for America, they presumed it was tasked to *subdue* the perceived republican tendencies of the colonies,

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, John Knox, 7 October 1711.

²⁸⁴ LAC, MG40-Q11, 'A list of the transport ships that were lost...'

²⁸⁵ This account was probably produced as a response to the attempt by Thomas Cathurst, presumably one of the ship's owners, to be paid the value of the *Neptune* in 1715 which was referred to the Treasury. Commissioner of Transports Musgrave agreed he should be paid, especially as the *Neptune* was originally hired for use in Europe. *Ibid.*, November 1715; crew numbers cross-referenced with O'Callaghan, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, V, pp. 284-285, Hunter to Dartmouth, 12 November 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 375.

particularly Massachusetts and New York.²⁸⁶ Rumours of a British attempt to impose direct government upon the colonials were spread around Boston by the Frenchman, Sieur de la Ronde Denis, who was there ostensibly to negotiate prisoner exchanges.²⁸⁷ He was detained upon Nicholson's arrival.²⁸⁸ Vaudreuil naturally remained alert to British intentions regarding Canada since the capture of Port Royal and the aborted expeditions of 1709 and 1710. At Quebec, royal authority was usually required to improve defences, which was duly invoked in 1710. Such authority was not needed in emergencies, however, and in 1711 works were improved without proper authorisation.²⁸⁹ This involved fortifying the Beauport shore, where Phips landed in 1690, as well as other potential landing sites, in addition to mills and houses on the St Charles River which flanked Quebec and feeds into the St Lawrence. In the lower town, the batteries were repaired and a new one constructed; in the upper town, various works were repaired and the Grand Battery built. This was all organised by the engineer, Beaucours.²⁹⁰ The Grand Battery would have rained shot and shell upon any ship that sailed too close to Quebec, positioned as it was on an impressive vantage point atop a rocky outcrop.²⁹¹ Vaudreuil initiated his defence plans earlier in the year when he ordered that the women, the sick and the elderly, along with spare cattle, were to flee to the woods on first sight of the enemy.²⁹²

²⁸⁶ TNA, SP 42/68, Walker to St John, 12 September 1711; also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 358 and n. 2; Francis Parkman, *A Half-century of Conflict*, I, p. 152.

²⁸⁷ Leach, *Roots of Conflict*, p. 32; Waller, G. M., *Samuel Vetch, Colonial Enterpriser*, (Chapel Hill (North Carolina), 1960), p. 218. French admittance to his true scheme was detailed in an intercepted letter given to Walker, Walker, 'Journal', p. 146, 6 September 1711.

²⁸⁸ Walker, 'Journal', p. 100, 25 June 1711.

²⁸⁹ Charbonneau, André; Desloges, Yvon; and Lafrance, Marc, *Québec the Fortified City: From the 17th to the 19th Century*, (Ottawa, 1982), p. 237.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

²⁹¹ Chartrand, *French Fortresses in North America*, pp. 22-23.

²⁹² O'Callaghan, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, IX, p. 860, Vaudreuil to Pontchartrain, 25 October 1711.

Fortunately for the French, their sudden flurry of activity was unnecessary and effective defences would not be needed for almost another fifty years. Despite French knowledge of a possible attack, had Walker continued he may have found an ill-prepared city as intelligence received on 9 September indicated that the French had expected them during the normal season for such operations in June or July.²⁹³ In fact, Vaudreuil had set up his headquarters at Montreal to face the threat from Nicholson and the Five Nations, not leaving until mid-September. Although the British were then not expected, Vaudreuil remained upon his guard as Nicholson threatened further action against New France.²⁹⁴

Whilst at Boston, Hill and Walker had also been devising a strategy about how they would attack Quebec. A colonial lieutenant who had been prisoner there had told them that it was 'indifferently fortified [with] not many people to defend it'.²⁹⁵ Quebec was also rumoured to be short of powder which would negate the usefulness of its numerically superior cannon. Hill had accurate intelligence that Vaudreuil was at Montreal with most of his troops.²⁹⁶ He consulted Major Livingston, who imparted his recent knowledge of Quebec's defences. Livingston was very much involved in planning the prospective siege of Quebec.²⁹⁷ Colonel King had advised that Walker consult with Livingston too. The Admiral consequently thought 'it would be necessary for us to provide cranes to get the cannon up the high rocks about the town, in order for raising batteries against it'.²⁹⁸ This demonstrates a shocking gap in the

²⁹³ Walker, 'Journal', p. 150, 9 September 1711.

²⁹⁴ O'Callaghan, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, IX, pp. 859-862, Vaudreuil to Pontchartrain, 25 October 1711 and Pontchartrain to Vaudreuil, 25 June 1712.

²⁹⁵ Walker, 'Journal', p. 107, 29 June 1711; TNA, CO 5/9, Hill's journal, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 341.

²⁹⁶ Walker, 'Journal', p. 119, 25 July 1711.

²⁹⁷ TNA, CO 5/9, Hill's journal, 1 July 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 341.

²⁹⁸ Walker, 'Journal', pp. 111-112, 3 July 1711.

knowledge of the expedition's commanders for the task ahead and illuminates how little intelligence of Quebec was acquired by St John for their use. Quebec's raised position would clearly defy any effort made by a ship-of-the-line to engage it with broadsides. The lower town could be engaged, but would surely respond in kind with its strong batteries at the shore. Walker and Hill may have planned to support the land regiments with a naval bombardment, although it was clear from Livingston that only the bomb vessels would be able to provide any assistance to take the upper town and this suggests that an attack from the landward side of Quebec was deemed the most appropriate course of action.

King himself had already been pondering how such a siege would be conducted after learning that Quebec was a strong place surrounded by 'woods, rocks and precipices'. To assemble the artillery in an effective location he had 'provided...a crane and other engines' as well as forty horses acquired in Boston.²⁹⁹ King stated the reason for acquiring horses was because the seamen would be needed to contend with preserving their ships from the 'fireworks' released by the defenders on rafts to attempt to burn or drive ashore the ships, similar to what was described by Major Lloyd in 1709. Evidently the cannon were originally intended to be manoeuvred by the men equipped with 500 harnesses.³⁰⁰ Whilst optimistic of success, King also proved to be prophetic:

if storms, contrary winds, and the difficult navigation of the river don't defeat us, I believe it's certain nothing else can...these losses [desertions], delays [at Boston and New York] and

²⁹⁹ TNA, CO 5/898, King's journal, 29 June 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 320, describes a requirement for thirty horses originally. *The Boston News-Letter* (no. 379, 16-23 July 1711, in Walker, 'Journal', p. 127) gave the number of horses carried by the fleet as forty; nevertheless this appears a small number to draw twenty large cannon and to cover attrition.

³⁰⁰ TNA, SP 41/34, Dartmouth to Master-General of the Ordnance, 16 January 1711. Special harnesses were acquired for when men were needed to drag artillery, Scouller, *The Armies of Queen Anne*, p. 182.

lateness of the season I don't think are sufficient reasons to [doubt]... succeeding; so that I still firmly believe nothing but the navigation of the river of St Lawrence or a force from Europe can defeat us.³⁰¹

However, in his journal entry on the previous day, he added that the lateness might have an effect and, in the usual manner of a British officer, blamed the colonials: 'I can't imagine what their designs could be by all these delays if they were not to detain us here till the advanced season of the year will probably defeat us'.³⁰² His engineer, Lieutenant-Colonel George Vane, was also initially optimistic, but the information he had at Boston indicated that Quebec was 'much stronger than was at first represented'.³⁰³

There had almost been a significant alteration to their strategy, however. St John had held back a dispatch vessel, in August, from delivering a letter to Hill for a surprising reason. Part of the expedition was considered to be sent on another 'enterprise' in the West Indies after conquering New France, in a complete reversal of Wheler's and Walker's previous expeditions.³⁰⁴ Although it was made clear that this plan had been ultimately decided against, it was clear, in a similar letter to Walker (although the West Indies was not named to him), that it was proposed only once the expedition had departed British waters.³⁰⁵ Such a task may have been more feasible for Walker to accomplish, given the season of year. Nevertheless, his instructions

³⁰¹ TNA, CO 5/898, King to St John, 25 July 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 315.

³⁰² TNA, CO 5/898, King's Journal, 24 July 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 325.

³⁰³ BL, Stowe 246/4-5, Vane to Craggs, 6 August 1711.

³⁰⁴ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Hill, 7 August 1711.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, St John to Walker, 7 August 1711.

stated that Newfoundland was his secondary target. With the abandonment of the Quebec project it was time for the commanders to decide what to do next.

X: The Homeward Voyage

Colonel King was disappointed that his preparations did not bear fruit. After the consultation of the sea officers, he went to see Walker concerning a proposed attack on Placentia. The Admiral had actually suggested attacking there rather than Quebec whilst at Boston. Given the known difficulties of the St Lawrence and coupled with the unwillingness of the pilots, it would have offered the greatest chance of success, but the idea was dismissed because of the restrictions imposed in St John's instructions.³⁰⁶ As the fleet was about to depart Boston in July, Hill wrote to St John noting that he thought it already too late in the season to attack Placentia once Quebec was taken.³⁰⁷ Walker agreed with King, however, and decided that the fleet would rendezvous at Spanish River, being nearer to Newfoundland. A pilot was acquired, whilst those employed to guide them up the St Lawrence were released from service and sent back to Boston in the *Sapphire*. Walker also received a plan of Placentia from Vane.³⁰⁸

The fleet arrived at the rendezvous on 4 September and Walker was determined to attack Placentia, or at least wait in the colonies during winter to attempt something in the next campaign. Failing that, he considered sailing to the West Indies to attempt something there. King and Captain Paddon agreed with his sentiments but,

³⁰⁶ Walker, 'Journal', p. 116, 11 July 1711. St John's instructions did not set any scope for a council of war. McLay, *Combined Operations*, p. 351 states that if this had been sanctioned, an attempt on Quebec would have been abandoned.

³⁰⁷ TNA, SP 42/68, Hill to St John, 31 July 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 339.

³⁰⁸ Walker, 'Journal', pp. 142-143, 26-27 August 1711.

upon consultation with Hill, again aboard the *Windsor*, he found the discussion turning towards a homeward voyage. Hill's outburst in his letter to St John begging to be sent home may explain this.³⁰⁹ He suggested that they were within their rights to return, whilst Walker was of the opinion that he could not without receiving further instructions from London. The Admiral had grown enthusiastic about an attack on Placentia, perhaps attempting to counter the blame he knew that he would inevitably receive for his failure on the St Lawrence. In light of this, he found some men embarked upon the transports that were familiar with Placentia and then sent out a small expedition to sound possible anchorages and attack routes. Placentia's defences were reportedly strong in 1710. Admiralty intelligence suggested that it had a garrison of 350 soldiers and two strong points. One was Fort Louis which contained fifty guns and two mortars; the other was a castle dominating the town which mounted twenty guns and four mortars.³¹⁰ Paddon had found a good place to land and had even set himself ashore to find that the soil was good enough to establish a camp.³¹¹

However, it became apparent that, with the progress of the seasons and the Atlantic stirring into its usual wintry stormy nature, an attack would have to be postponed until spring 1712. Early on 5 September, Walker boarded the *Windsor* once again to discuss plans, but discovered that Hill was not yet awake. Instead he visited King who agreed that it would be more appropriate to attack in the spring. Once Hill finally joined them he let it be known that he disagreed, remaining of the belief that they should return to England. He saw the disaster as a convenient reason

³⁰⁹ TNA, SP 42/68, Hill to St John, 12 August 1711.

³¹⁰ Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 266, n. 1, Captain John Aldred to Burchett, 19 July 1710.

³¹¹ Walker, 'Journal', pp. 144-145, 4 September 1711.

to abort the expedition and Walker noted in his journal that Hill ‘did not perceive that returning to Britain could be the least prejudicial to me’.³¹² There was some ambiguity here as both Walker and Hill were positively ordered to attack Placentia, but only if the ‘season will permit’.³¹³ The instructions also assumed success at Quebec and were very unclear on what to do in the event of failure as there was no criterion for returning until the capture of that city. Indeed, the orders did not state what they were to do in the case of failure. Walker needed the cooperation of Hill to make a success of the expedition and was dismayed when he became aware that this was not forthcoming.

Hill responded to Walker’s persistence by calling a council of war, which Walker agreed to but stated again that his instructions forbade a return to Britain. French vessels were intercepted around Placentia, where letters from its governor were captured, but such successes proved ultimately fruitless. A great storm had delayed the meeting of the council of war until the 8 September, but this time it was held aboard the *Edgar*.³¹⁴ A letter from Dudley the day before may have swung the decision. In it he stated that there would be a delay in accumulating the extra provisions for the fleet and therefore would not be ready to sail until the beginning of October.³¹⁵ This would have taken at least another month to join the fleet – which they expected to find at Quebec. The *Feversham* and its transports, of course, were unable to deliver these stores and they were unaware of the misfortune inflicted upon the fleet. At the council of war, it was calculated that provisions were rapidly

³¹² *Ibid.*, p. 145, 5 September 1711.

³¹³ TNA, SP 44/213, Walker’s Instructions, no. 10, 11 April 1711 and Hill’s Instructions, no. 21, 11 April 1711, also in Graham, ‘The Walker Expedition to Quebec’, pp. 166 and 284.

³¹⁴ Walker, ‘Journal’, pp. 145-148, 5-8 September 1711. The *Montague* captured a sloop from Placentia, TNA, ADM 51/614, captain’s log *Montague*, 9 September 1711.

³¹⁵ Walker, ‘Journal’, appendix, pp. 250-251, Dudley to Walker, 11 August 1711.

diminishing. They correctly assumed the transports would not have arrived until November, when the coastal waters of Newfoundland were very dangerous. The agent-victuallers, including Netmaker, calculated that there were only enough provisions for the remaining 7,643 men³¹⁶ to last until the end of November, at short allowance. No mention was made of remaining on station, probably as such a large force could not winter at Boston given its lack of capacity to feed and shelter large numbers of men, and repair naval vessels. The West Indies was the only real option despite the threat of disease. In light of overwhelming uncertainties and the fear of losing more men and ships, Walker gave in and it was decided to return to Britain.³¹⁷ This was eerily reminiscent of his service under Vice-Admiral Graydon in 1703 and Walker's knowledge of Newfoundland from back then may have inspired him in his effort to attack Placentia.

Colonel Clayton was sent ahead in the *Leopard* to inform the ministry in London of this decision.³¹⁸ With Clayton's arrival in England there were no orders forthcoming for the continuation of the war in America for the following year. The Irish ports were, however, notified to prepare victuals in case Walker had to put in there.³¹⁹ One letter from the fleet, possibly carried by the *Leopard*, found its way into the hands of James Craggs, a prominent Whig and a supporter of Marlborough. The letter was from Lieutenant Hughes of the train and informed the ministry's opponents of the events in the St Lawrence. Hughes thought the entire fleet had nearly succumbed to the same fate as the lost transports. Seymour's regiment, in particular,

³¹⁶ The colonials and other unnecessary auxiliaries were probably excluded from this total and implies that several hundred men had deserted at Boston.

³¹⁷ TNA, SP 42/68 and CO 5/9, Council of War, 8 September 1711, also in Walker, 'Journal', appendix, pp. 251-252.

³¹⁸ Walker, 'Journal', pp. 152-153, 11-12 September 1711.

³¹⁹ TNA, SP 44/216, Dartmouth to Admiralty, 9 October 1711.

took heavy losses of more than 160 men, along with twenty of their women. After the disaster there was ‘various discourse as to what had happened’, but it was agreed that Walker had mistaken what side of the river the fleet was on, which was true enough, although his subordinates had thought likewise. Strong words reportedly ensued when Hughes described the Master of the *Colchester*³²⁰ telling the Admiral that ‘his damned signal had ruined him, and was the cause of the destruction of 1,200 people’. The figure was exaggerated, but the rage is understandable. The master further confirmed the confusion over their position by saying that he had not seen the south shore which Paddon thought had been observed earlier. Hughes concluded the account by declaring sardonically, ‘I believe we are bound home, if we can find our way’.³²¹ Hill asked St John for understanding in another private letter and hoped he would not ‘lose your good opinion [for it] would very much add to the trouble’.³²² Walker’s explanation was more confident and forward-looking, and even communicated the strategic value of Spanish River as the perfect springboard for another attempt as it ‘[commands] the bay of St Lawrence as that of Gibraltar the straights’.³²³

The fleet redistributed what supplies it had left amongst the ships. Whilst watering and preparing to sail, Indians attacked and killed some of the men ashore and set a small ship on fire; meanwhile the *Sunderland*’s cook was tried for sodomy. Walker’s final act, to ease his conscience and salvage some honour, was to employ a carpenter to make a decorated board to fix upon a tree, declaring that the Queen had

³²⁰ Master Joseph Hinning. 150 men out of 330 of Seymour’s regiment were lost on his ship. Walker, ‘Journal’, p. 140, 24 August 1711.

³²¹ BL, Stowe 246 f. 12-13, Hughes to Lloyd, to Craggs, 12 September 1711.

³²² TNA, SP 42/68, Hill to St John, 11 September 1711.

³²³ *Ibid.*, Walker to St John, 12 September 1711, also in Graham, ‘The Walker Expedition to Quebec’, pp. 357-359.

claim to this land.³²⁴ Ironically, as this was Cape Breton Island, it was the only part of Acadia that was not ceded to the British at the peace. The fleet departed Spanish River on 16 September and embarked upon a stormy but quick passage across the Atlantic. The colonials were returned to Boston and reinforcements sent to Annapolis Royal to counter the French and Indian threat there.³²⁵

The entire fleet sailed into St Helens on 9 October, only six days after the *Leopard's* arrival at Plymouth.³²⁶ Three weeks before, *The Daily Courant* reported the return of the *Devonshire* and *Humber* – the two eighty-gun ships Walker ordered to cruise at the mouth of the St Lawrence. They carried an update of Walker's progress, stated as being eighty leagues from Quebec – approximately the point where the disaster occurred.³²⁷ Remarkably, while Walker was journeying to London, the *Edgar* exploded destroying all of his charts and papers along with 500 crew. The cause has not been fully established, but it was probably due to a spark inadvertently caused by a thief in the gunpowder magazine.³²⁸ Such catastrophes did occur from time to time, including the destruction of the *Carlisle* which blew up whilst under Rooke's command in 1700.³²⁹ Nevertheless, the accident resulted in years of investigation by the Admiralty, primarily into the accounts of the expedition, which

³²⁴ Walker, 'Journal', pp. 153-154, 12-15 September 1711; TNA, ADM 51/614, captain's log *Montague*, 31 September 1711.

³²⁵ Walker, 'Journal', pp. 154-157, 16 September-9 October 1711.

³²⁶ This was due to a stormy passage, harassment by privateers, and sickness amongst the crew, which was so bad that some of Seymour's soldiers had to help man it, to return safely, Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 39; *London Gazette*, 6-9 October 1711, issue 4910.

³²⁷ *Daily Courant*, 19 September 1711, issue 3100.

³²⁸ TNA, ADM 1/577, Walker to Burchett, 11 November 1713; *Evening Post*, 16-18 October 1711, issue 341; Walker, 'Journal', p. 157, 9-17 October 1711; Churchill, *Marlborough*, IV, p. 396; Swift, Jonathan, (Aitken, George A ed.), *Journal to Stella*, (London, 1901), Letter XXXII, 16 October 1711, p. 315. A naval ballad was composed about the *Edgar's* loss, untitled and unaccredited, Firth, C. H., (ed.), 'Naval Songs and Ballads', *Navy Records Society*, vol. XXXIII, (1907), pp. 160-162.

³²⁹ Browning, O., (ed.), 'Journals of Sir George Rooke', *Navy Records Society*, vol. IX, (1897), p. 115; Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, p. 137.

were destroyed along with Walker's personal clerk and property.³³⁰ Disney's companies that were stranded on the *Mary*, which sought shelter in Ireland, only arrived at Boston when the fleet had almost returned to home port.³³¹

XI: Conclusion

After a successful transatlantic voyage, free from the threat posed by Duguay-Trouin's squadron, Walker and Hill faced a very difficult time at Boston in preparing their force. Desertion had reached epidemic proportions, and problems of supply and demand had created a friction with the colonials that frustrated the expedition's departure for over a month. This was exacerbated by Nicholson's unusual neglect in not sending his transports to New York. Boston had risen to the challenge, however, and had managed to supply a large quantity of victuals, but the expedition was dependent on receiving further supplies after its departure. Walker and Hill had done all that was in their power to prepare for an attack on Quebec. Several vessels were lost on the St Lawrence due to a simple navigational error, which was a common eighteenth-century occurrence and should not be ascribed to poor seamanship. The unknown navigation, combined with inexperienced pilots sailing at night in poor weather, resulted in the accident.

Although the senior officers on the expedition were unaware of the fate of the *Feversham*, the decision to abandon Quebec proved justified. It would not have been sensible to continue to Quebec when so many had been lost and the naval officers knew it. This did not indicate fear, they had a duty to provide for the safety of the fleet and that could not be guaranteed if they progressed further. More danger would

³³⁰ TNA, ADM 1/577, Walker to Burchett, 11 November 1713.

³³¹ Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 377, Dudley to St John, 13 November 1711.

certainly be found if the fleet had continued into the unknown and they also risked having to winter at Quebec with few supplies. Provisions had been dangerously depleted by the return journey to Britain. The fleet could not realistically winter in the colonies as it would put pressure upon both their finances and the colonials, who were in no position to feed them. The colonies at this stage could not maintain such a fleet either, as ports and harbours, such as Boston and New York, lacked dry dock facilities, and the manpower and expertise to maintain and careen numerous large vessels. Walker suspected he would face difficulty back in Britain, but Hill could not be convinced to attempt an assault on Placentia so late in the year. Walker finally kissed the Queen's hand on 19 October to apologise for the disappointment of the Quebec expedition.³³² He was unprepared for what was to come.

³³² Walker, 'Journal', p. 158, 19 October 1711.

CHAPTER 5

THE AFTERMATH OF THE EXPEDITION

The expedition's failure was not as detrimental to British interests as it could have been. When the preliminary articles of the peace negotiations were finalised in autumn 1711, news of the disaster on the St Lawrence had not yet reached the Tory negotiators. Therefore the expedition had not affected, positively or negatively, the outcome of the peace.¹ The British, with an eye on potential Canadian success, managed to defer the future of Canada to be determined in the general treaty. The issue of Newfoundland was settled in the preliminaries, meaning that had Rear-Admiral Walker taken Placentia it would have made little difference as it was to be ceded to Great Britain anyway thanks to the skill of its diplomats.² Whilst Newfoundland was to be given to the British, albeit with the liberty of French fisherman to use its northern shore, St John inserted into the eighth clause that Britain and France should retain whatever territory in North America remained in their respective possession in the hope that the expedition would succeed.³ The preliminaries were signed on 27 September 1711⁴ and were made public.⁵ News of the disaster arrived only a week later which temporarily weakened Britain's

¹ Hattendorf, John B., *England in the War of the Spanish Succession: A Study of the English View and Conduct of Grand Strategy, 1702-1712*, (New York; London, 1987), pp. 246-247; Veenendaal, A. J., 'The War of the Spanish Succession in Europe', in Bromley, J. S. (ed.), *The New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. XI, *The Rise of Great Britain and Russia, 1688-1715*, (Cambridge, 1970), p. 442.

² Staffordshire Record Office (hereafter cited as SRO), D742/U/1/37, Cabinet minutes referring to the eighth article of the peace preliminaries, 21 September 1711; Cobbett, W., *The Parliamentary History of England*, (1811), VII, app. I (Report of the committee of secrecy, 1715), col. ix; Rich, E. E., 'The Hudson's Bay Company and the Treaty of Utrecht', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, vol. XI, no. 2 (1954), p. 197.

³ Preliminary articles in Cobbett, W., *The Parliamentary History of England*, VII, app. I (Report of the committee of secrecy, 1715), cols. cv, cix; Rich, 'The Hudson's Bay Company and the Treaty of Utrecht', p. 197.

⁴ 8 October 1711 NS.

⁵ *Post Man and the Historical Account*, 27-30 October 1711, issue 2062.

negotiating position, but its diplomatic strength at Utrecht was evident and the expedition probably had no impact on the decisions made there.⁶ With the articles signed, the Dutch followed Britain's lead – otherwise they would be left without anything to show for ten years of fighting.⁷ They only learnt of British treachery when the peace preliminaries were revealed to them, around the time of the expedition's departure.⁸ Nevertheless, despite the extent of the failure, Acadia was confirmed to be British, as was Newfoundland and Hudson's Bay.⁹ The Canadians clearly suffered from the decisions made by the French diplomats; even so, its small population could not have secured a lasting advantageous settlement when the British colonies were so populous.¹⁰

Divisions between Harley and St John were accentuated by the failure of the expedition. When Harley returned to business after his recovery from the injury inflicted by Guiscard, in May 1711, he was created earl of Oxford and Mortimer, whilst his authority was reinforced by his appointment to the position of lord treasurer. This angered St John whose ambition craved a peerage and greater power. He could only hope for good news from Canada, the glory from which may have secured such desires. When the expedition returned with the unfortunate truth, Jonathan Swift, present at supper with both rivals, witnessed their emotions: 'The Secretary [St John] is much mortified about Hill, because this expedition was of his

⁶ Rich, 'The Hudson's Bay Company and the Treaty of Utrecht', p. 197

⁷ Hill, B. W., 'Oxford, Bolingbroke, and the Peace of Utrecht', *The Historical Journal*, vol. XVI, no. 2 (June, 1973), p. 252.

⁸ Biddle, Sheila, *Bolingbroke and Harley*, (London, 1975), p. 220.

⁹ Although the south shore of the St Lawrence, as well as Cape Breton Island, remained in French hands, whilst the northern coast of Newfoundland was allowed to be a base for French fishermen.

¹⁰ 'Canada could have lost the Peace of Utrecht without losing the war... Canadians and their allies inflicted casualties at a ratio of at least three to one. But anything less than a ratio of ten to one meant that Canada was still losing the manpower struggle with the Americans. Britain herself lost as many men off Egg Island as her colonies lost in a generation', Steele, Ian K., *Guerillas and Grenadiers: The Struggle for Canada, 1689-1760*, (Toronto, 1969), pp. 41-42.

contriving, and he counted much upon it; but Lord Treasurer [Harley] was just as merry as usual'.¹¹

I: The Effect of Failure

The Quebecois were in an equally jubilant mood to Harley. Upon learning of the fate of Walker's fleet, the churches of New France celebrated the destruction of the transports with the singing of *Te Deums*. Father de la Colombière explained to his congregation that the Virgin Mary had intervened to wreck Walker's fleet. His sermon was identical to the one he had given in 1690 in response to Phip's expedition.¹² To mark their release from danger, the church in the lower town was renamed *Notre-Dames-Des-Victoires* to thank the Virgin Mary for Quebec's deliverance. Above its altar, a mural still depicts an angel smiting the British fleet on the rocks of the St Lawrence. A salvage vessel later proceeded to plunder the wreck site.¹³ Furthermore, the French retaliated with reprisals on the frontier between the empires, which Governor Robert Hunter described as having become 'infested...by the French Indians'.¹⁴ This was probably caused by the treaty of neutrality that the

¹¹ Swift, Jonathan, (Aitken, George A. ed.), *Journal to Stella*, (London, 1901), Letter XXXI, 6 October 1711, p. 309

¹² 'Thus consigning the Walker and Phips expeditions to a shared infamy', Miquelon, David, *New France 1701-1744, "A Supplement to Europe"*, (Toronto, 1987), p. 46.

¹³ Graham, Gerald S. (ed.), 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec, 1711', *Navy Records Society*, vol. XCIV, (1953), p. 43. Amongst the objects, they found dead horse, sheep, dogs and hens, whilst the number of dead reported was greatly exaggerated, Parkman, Francis, *A Half-Century of Conflict*, (Boston, 1896), I, p. 173.

¹⁴ O'Callaghan, E. B. (ed.), *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, vol. V, *London Documents*, (Albany, 1855), p. 284, Hunter to Dartmouth, 12 November 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 375; Haffenden, Philip, S., 'France and England in North America, 1689-1713', Bromley, J. S. (ed.), *The New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. VI, *The Rise of Great Britain and Russia, 1688-1715*, (Cambridge, 1970), p. 506; Headlam, Cecil, (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Colonial*, (6 vols. (1702-1712), London, 1913-1925), (hereafter cited as CSPC), 1712-1714, p. 8, no. 12, Memorial of English prisoners in Canada to [Dartmouth?], 16 July 1712.

Five Nations signed with the French in the spring of 1712, owing to their disappointment with the expedition's outcome.¹⁵

Governor-General Vaudreuil had been preparing an expedition to recapture Annapolis Royal in early 1711, which was postponed indefinitely because of the British expedition bound for Quebec.¹⁶ This, at least, was one positive outcome of the expedition, leading to Acadia, bar Cape Breton Island, being confirmed as a British possession at the Treaty of Utrecht.¹⁷ Walker's presence had deterred the French from altering the strategic balance in North America and put them on the defensive, although the British garrison at Annapolis Royal still suffered from local attacks and desertion.¹⁸ If the Acadians had received reinforcements, then it is perfectly possible that the territory would have remained in French hands after Utrecht.

As the threat on the St Lawrence had subsided, Quebec's defences continued to be improved. Intercepted letters revealed that the Quebecois believed that the St Lawrence was their best defence. However, after the expedition's demise, further improvements to Quebec's fortifications were made in addition to those hastily

¹⁵ Leach, D. E., *Arms for Empire: A Military History of the British Colonies in North America, 1607-1763*, (New York, 1973), p. 154.

¹⁶ Hutchinson, Thomas, *The history of the province of Massachusetts-Bay*, (Boston, 1767), p. 199; Palfrey, John Gorham, *History of New England*, (Boston, 1875), IV, p. 286; Tuttle, Charles Richard, *Tuttle's Popular History of the Dominion of Canada*, (Montreal, Boston, Moncton, London, 1877), I, p. 188.

¹⁷ However, the borders between British and French territory remained indistinct, Gwyn, Julian, 'The Royal Navy in North America, 1712-1776', in Black, Jeremy and Woodfine, Philip, (eds), *British Navy and the Use of Naval Power in the Eighteenth Century*, (Leicester, 1988), p. 132. A map of 1733 included Cape Breton Island as a part of British territory, along with the south shore of the St Lawrence, which shows just how confused contemporaries in Europe were by the boundaries imposed at Utrecht. The National Archives (hereafter cited as TNA), MPI 1/303, Henry Popple, 'A Map of the British Empire in America with the French and Spanish Settlements Adjacent thereto', 1733.

¹⁸ Plank, Geoffrey, 'New England and the Conquest', in Reid, John G.; Basque, Maurice; Mancke, Elizabeth; Moody, Barry; Plank, Geoffrey and William Wicken, (eds), *The 'Conquest' of Acadia, 1710: Imperial, Colonial and Aboriginal Constructions*, (Toronto, 2004), p. 77; *CSPC*, 1710-1711, pp. 552-554, no. 887, Vetch to Dartmouth, 18 June 1711; British Library (hereafter cited as BL), Stowe 246 f. 4, Vane to Craggs, 6 August 1711.

constructed since 1709.¹⁹ Expenditure on fortifications increased by an estimated ninety-seven per cent in 1711-1712 – an obvious response to British strategy. This then decreased by fifty-eight per cent in 1713 – lower than spending in 1710 – when peace was secured and with fortifications either completed or thought no longer necessary.²⁰ Redoubts were constructed in 1712, along with a wall along the eastern cliff almost 660 feet long, as well as a temporary masonry curtain wall and demi-bastions to cover the redoubts.²¹ Fortification became so important that stonemasons were not even allowed to work on private contracts for individuals.²² After the construction of the fortress at Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island, which began in 1719, the population of Quebec became complacent behind their earthworks, until the former fell in 1745.²³ This resulted in Quebec's first permanent masonry walls being constructed.²⁴ Similarly, the expedition served to prompt the improvement of Montreal's defences when in 1713 it was decided to replace its wooden palisade with stone walls.²⁵

Vengeance was wrought by the French during the summer of 1712, as the Grand Alliance was disintegrating. A small French privateer squadron, under Jacques Cassard, harassed various allied possessions in the Caribbean and South America. Cassard attacked the Cape Verde islands, Montserrat, Antigua and Surinam and, according to Thomas More Molyneux, the French court 'insisted... he had only

¹⁹ Walker, Hovenden, 'A Journal: Or Full Account of the Late Expedition to Canada', appendix, pp. 248-249, in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec' (hereafter cited as Walker, 'Journal'), Engineer to Pontchartrain, 22 July 1711.

²⁰ Charbonneau, André; Desloges, Yvon; and Lafrance, Marc, *Québec the Fortified City: From the 17th to the 19th Century*, (Ottawa, 1982), p. 303, table 4.

²¹ The Royal and Dauphine redoubts, *ibid.*, p. 44.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 313.

²³ Chartrand, René, *French Fortresses in North America 1535-1763: Québec, Montréal, Louisbourg and New Orleans*, (Oxford; New York, 2005), pp. 47-48.

²⁴ Charbonneau; Desloges; and Lafrance, *Québec the Fortified City*, p. 460.

²⁵ Work started in 1717 and completed in 1744, Chartrand, *French Fortresses in North America*, pp. 33, 36.

general instructions which he had misapplied'.²⁶ Messages declaring the cessation of war were only just arriving in the West Indies.²⁷ French claims of innocence were refuted by John Campbell when he proclaimed in his naval history: 'I have been informed, by some who were very well acquainted with the politics of the French court, that this expedition was projected in revenge of that undertaken against Quebec'.²⁸ The French perhaps felt they could be duplicitous, despite St John staying the hand of the Duke of Ormonde (Marlborough's replacement as captain-general of British troops in Flanders) in operations against Marshal Villars, because of the previous year's simultaneous Quebec expedition and secret peace negotiations.²⁹ It was a most fitting time for Cassard to attack, if revenge was truly the motive, as the commander of the Jamaica squadron at the time was none other than Rear-Admiral Walker.

Governor Walter Douglas of the Leeward Islands was worried about the possibility of an insurrection against him. To provide for his own immediate security needs, Douglas consequently failed to alert Walker to the expected presence of nine French men-of-war. Cassard was alerted of Walker's approach whilst he was sacking Montserrat and immediately departed, diverting his attention towards the Dutch at Surinam where he had greater success by carrying off 800,000 pieces of eight.³⁰ The Jamaica squadron's presence was deterrent enough for Cassard to evacuate the

²⁶ Molyneux, Thomas More, *Conjunct Expeditions: or Expeditions that have been Carried on Jointly by the Fleet and Army, with a Commentary on Littoral War*, (London, 1759), p. 166.

²⁷ Lediard, Thomas, *The Naval History of England*, (London, 1735), II, p. 859.

²⁸ Campbell, John, *Lives of Admirals, and Other Eminent British Seamen*, (London, 1750), IV, p. 185.

²⁹ Parke, Gilbert, *Letters and Correspondence, Public and Private, of the Right Honourable Henry St John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke; During the Time He was Secretary of State to Queen Anne...*, (London, 1798), II, pp. 319-321, St John to Ormonde, 10 May 1712.

³⁰ Burchett, Josiah, *A Complete History of the Most Remarkable Transactions at Sea*, (London, 1720), V, chapter XXXIII *passim.*, and Molyneux, *Conjunct Expeditions*, p. 166; Campbell, J, and Kent, John, *Biographia Nautica*, (Dublin, 1785), V, p. 135.

immediate vicinity of the British colonies.³¹ As Cassard had also attacked Portuguese and Dutch colonies, revenge against Britain cannot have been the only factor in his mission, but the attacks on British possessions were probably intended to be punitive.

Walker successfully secured the valuable West Indies trade despite the proximity of the French privateers, but the failure at Quebec may have left the northern British colonies fearing for their security. The American colonists could only be left disappointed by the fleet's retreat and the expedition confirmed that there was a growing rift in Anglo-American relations.³² Naturally, recriminations were exchanged between the British and colonials.³³ The expedition commanders had already quarrelled with Governor Joseph Dudley, perceiving the colonists to have hindered rather than aided the preparations at Boston.³⁴ Whilst there, Colonel King correctly noted Nicholson's failings:

this want of convoy for our provisions...is entirely owing to Colonel Nicholson's neglect [in not sending the transports to New York]...he not only risked disappointing the diversion [to Montreal] he is to make, but even the whole expedition by detaining us here for want of provisions, till the season is too far advanced.³⁵

However, King's frustrations were mainly targeted against the Massachusetts authorities:

³¹ Lediard, *The Naval History of England*, II, p. 859.

³² Leach, Douglas Edward, *Roots of Conflict: British Armed Forces and Colonial Americans, 1677-1763*, (Chapel Hill (North Carolina), 1986), p. 41.

³³ Leach, *Arms for Empire*, p. 153.

³⁴ Walker, 'Journal', appendix, pp. 223-227, Council and Dudley to Walker, 27 July 1711 and Walker to Council and Dudley, 28 July 1711.

³⁵ TNA, CO 5/898, King's journal, 1 July 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 321.

The government here did not put in execution any of the promises they made us. For the bread...to subsist our men...was not delivered. The fresh provisions...was not sufficient...And all other things to be provided, were wrought at with that sloth and indifference, there could be no fixing any time when they would be finished.³⁶

King was not entirely prejudicial towards the Bostonians, however, as after the disaster he wrote:

I can't express...the uneasiness it gives me to think what a loss it will prove to our poor American colonies; how much it will contribute to depopulate their frontiers, to diminish their trade, and discourage all people, by constant wars they must now be obliged to maintain... [and] that they dare hardly expect any relief for the future, when they see this great effort England made to succour them thus ruffled and defeated...³⁷

Colonial judge, Samuel Sewall, like many of his colonial contemporaries, was 'stunned' to hear of the failure.³⁸ Jeremiah Dummer, the colonial agent in London, was distraught but continued to lobby for the reduction of the French colonies and passed intelligence to the Board of Trade and Plantations to that end.³⁹ In an attempt to gain public support, Dummer produced two tracts, both defending the colonials against British charges of incompetence.⁴⁰ Governor's Dudley and Saltonstall (of Connecticut) both petitioned for another expedition to be sent, fearing further French

³⁶ TNA, CO 5/898, King's journal, 2 July 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 321.

³⁷ TNA, CO 5/898, King to St John, 11 September 1711, also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', pp. 334-335

³⁸ Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. VI, Fifth series, (Boston, 1879), p. 322, Sewall's Diary, 16 September 1711.

³⁹ Maxwell Lyte, H. C., (ed.), *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations*, (London, 1920), II, 1709-1715, Board minutes, 7 May 1712, [Journal book P.164-167] p. 363.

⁴⁰ Cohen, Sheldon S., 'The Diary of Jeremiah Dummer', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third series, vol. xxiv, no. 3 (July, 1967), p. 419; Dummer, Jeremiah, *A Letter to a Noble Lord Concerning the Late Expedition to Canada*, (London, 1712) and *A Letter to a Friend in the Country, on the Late Expedition to Canada*, (London, 1712).

reprisals.⁴¹ The colonial governors were also frustrated by some of the financial aspects of the expedition which were not cleared for years, including the pay of the thirty lieutenants, expedition charges to New Jersey and the costs of the *Province Galley*.⁴²

Colonel Lee of Rhode Island assumed Walker was probably at fault, but only because he was in charge.⁴³ Samuel Vetch, as the colonial instigator of the plan to take Quebec, was highly critical of Walker for abandoning the attempt. After conveying his suspicions of the French pilot to Walker, Vetch regarded himself to be the best pilot on the expedition, probably due to his 1705 visit to Quebec.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, he did not have any real experience of piloting and admitted as much himself, stating he ‘never was bred for sea’ and that it was not his ‘province’ but that of the pilots, especially with a fleet of large ships. He also admitted to St John that getting to Quebec ‘by reason of the difficulty of the navigation I look upon to be the [most difficult] part of the enterprise’.⁴⁵ Vetch initially sailed at the head of the fleet in the *Dispatch*, along with two other smaller vessels to guide the fleet. Once past Cape Breton, he was asked to transfer to the *Sapphire* frigate which then joined them. It was twice the tonnage of the *Dispatch* and possibly was to serve as a more suitable guide for the larger vessels, but Vetch refused on account of being unable to transfer

⁴¹ Graham, ‘The Walker Expedition to Quebec’, p. 379, Dudley to St John, 13 November 1711; *ibid.*, p. 376, Saltonstall to Lord High Treasurer, 12 November 1711.

⁴² Library and Archives Canada (hereafter cited as LAC), MG40-Q11, *The thirty lieutenants sent to New York...*; CSPPC, 1716-1717, no. 585, Hunter to Popple, 24 May 1717, p. 310; Walker said Southack’s fee for the *Province Galley* should be charged to Massachusetts as it was in their service, Maxwell Lyte, *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations*, II, 1709-1715, February 1714, [Journal book Q], p. 509; Hitchings, Sinclair, ‘Guarding the New England Coast: The Naval Career of Cyprian Southack’, in Smith, Philip, C. F., (ed.), *Seafaring in Colonial Massachusetts*, Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, no. 52, (Boston, 1980), p. 57.

⁴³ He also thought highly of Hill, although this was because Hill took Lee’s side in a dispute over his seniority. TNA, CO 5/9, Lee to Fox, 12 September 1711.

⁴⁴ Graham, ‘The Walker Expedition to Quebec’, p. 359, Vetch to St John, 10 August 1711; TNA, CO 5/9, Consultation of the sea officers, 25 August 1711, also in Walker’s ‘Journal’, appendix, p. 237.

⁴⁵ Graham, ‘The Walker Expedition to Quebec’, p. 359, Vetch to St John, 10 August 1711.

his baggage.⁴⁶ It was more likely that he was a little uneasy with the prospect of navigating the notorious St Lawrence in a larger vessel. Remaining on the *Dispatch*, Vetch was told that Walker would signal when he wanted him to go ahead again, but this signal never came.⁴⁷

Vetch was asked after the accident, at the consultation of the sea officers, if he could continue to guide the fleet. He replied: 'he could undertake nothing that related to sea affairs', but was happy to venture upriver in a smaller vessel.⁴⁸ Vetch later regretted not being more confident after the council of war had decided not to proceed and sent a letter to Walker asking for a further consultation, possibly to prevent any recriminations directed against him. In the letter he also wondered if the French pilots were responsible for the navigational errors that contributed to disaster.⁴⁹ This was nonsense as aside from putting their own lives at risk, Paradis, for example, was joined on the *Edgar* by Bonner, the respected New England pilot, where they conducted decisions together.⁵⁰

A storm had later battered the fleet whilst anchored in Spanish River to recuperate. It was so terrible that Vetch even admitted that a second disaster would likely have befallen the fleet had they continued, with either all ships lost, or if in the Gulf, driven onto Anticosti Island or the coast of Labrador.⁵¹ Given these contradictions, it was wise that Walker did not heed Vetch's insistence to be given a

⁴⁶ The *Sapphire* was larger than all of the ships in Phips' fleet. Winfield, Rif, *British Warships in the Age of Sail, 1603-1714*, (Barnsley, 2009), pp. 170, 224.

⁴⁷ G. M. Trevelyan was critical of Walker's neglect in using Vetch, *England Under Queen Anne*, (London, 1948), III, p. 145. Assistance would also be required from the *Dispatch*, *Four Friends* Brigantine, *Blessing* and *Goodwill* sloops. Signals for Captain Rouse, Walker, 'Journal', appendix, pp. 234-235.

⁴⁸ TNA, CO 5/9, Consultation of the sea officers, 25 August 1711, also in Walker's 'Journal', appendix, p. 237.

⁴⁹ Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', pp. 361-362, Vetch to Walker, 26 August 1711.

⁵⁰ TNA, CO 5/9, Consultation of the sea officers, 25 August 1711, also in Walker's 'Journal', appendix, pp. 235-237.

⁵¹ Walker, 'Journal', p. 148, 7 September 1711.

second chance to guide the fleet.⁵² Vetch stated that General Hill had the ‘zeal’ to continue, which clearly conflicts with Hill’s overwhelming desire to return home. It was notable that Hill left the decision to continue with Walker and his captains, knowing that most would not be inclined to continue and that he could not be held accountable for their decision. Vetch’s unwillingness to follow Walker’s orders to change vessels before the disaster is highly suggestive of his apprehensiveness for taking responsibility for such a large fleet in dangerous waters. Only once he realised that the British intended to abandon the expedition, threatening his plans for a continent free from French influence, did Vetch’s confidence materialise when he pleaded to guide the fleet onwards.

The colonies were reduced to squabbling with each other in the months after the failed venture, but hoped for another expedition nonetheless.⁵³ Walker was vexed by the way colonials thought how easy it was to sail to Quebec with a fleet. He compared these perceptions to it being ‘as easy as a citizen riding home in his chaise from Hamstead or Highgate, calling at a cake-house by the way, to regale himself and his spouse with a glass of cider and a cheesecake’.⁵⁴ The expedition intensified the divisions between the obstructive, profiteering colonial and the arrogant, officious British officer, which could only reinforce a mutual sense of mistrust and suspicion.⁵⁵ Herbert L. Osgood described this as a ‘natural antipathy between the British courtier-soldier and the provincial’.⁵⁶ Douglas Edward Leach has more recently seen in the

⁵² Graham, ‘The Walker Expedition to Quebec’, pp. 361-362, Vetch to Walker, 26 August 1711 also in Nova Scotia Historical Society, *Report and Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society for the Year 1884*, (Halifax, 1885), IV. pp. 110-111.

⁵³ O’Callaghan, E. B. (ed.), *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, vol. V, *London Documents*, (Albany, 1855), pp. 296-297, Hunter to St John, 1 January 1712.

⁵⁴ Walker, ‘Journal’, introduction, p. 76.

⁵⁵ Churchill, Winston S., *Marlborough: His Life and Times*, (London, 1938), IV, p. 396; Leach, *Roots of Conflict*, pp. 40-41, Graham, ‘The Walker Expedition to Quebec’, p. 40.

⁵⁶ Osgood, Herbert L., *The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century*, (New York, 1930), I, p. 445.

Bostonians of 1711 ‘a rising tide of self-assertive Yankee individualism, [reluctant] to make sacrifices for a distant crown’ which was an attitude which ‘[threw] a shadow toward Lexington Green’.⁵⁷ G. M. Trevelyan correctly stated that the Atlantic ‘kept the two parts of the empire in gross ignorance of one another’⁵⁸ and Governor Hunter revealed that

without speedy and effectual remedy [Her Majesty] can make no state of any government in this place, and in a little time, the disease may prove too strong [to] cure... it is in a bad state, the frequent tumults in all parts, and the general aversion to the support of government in most, are sufficient indications...putting all North America under one uniform plan of government, would most certainly be a sure remedy, but I am afraid it is too lingering a one for the present exigency.⁵⁹

This might explain why the French were spreading rumours around Boston that the British intended to impose government upon them. The road towards independence was being laid.

Initially, there was a fairly muted reaction in Britain to the disastrous events of August 1711. Many newspapers were full of anticipation: ‘we may suddenly expect to hear that the great enterprise has been crowned with the desired success’.⁶⁰ Instead, subsequent reports were full of news of the expedition’s failure. The first report of the disaster was printed on 6 October, shortly after Colonel Clayton had returned in the *Leopard*.⁶¹ The ministry quietly ignored the whole scheme and attention was

⁵⁷ Leach, *Arms for Empire*, pp. 147- 148.

⁵⁸ Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*, III, pp. 137-138.

⁵⁹ CSPC, 1711-1712, pp. 100-104, no. 96, Hunter to [St John ?], 12 September 1711.

⁶⁰ *The Post-Man and the Historical Account*, 4-6 October 1711, issue 2052.

⁶¹ *London Gazette*, Issue 4910, 6-9 October 1711, issue 4910; *The Post-Man and the Historical Account*, 6-9 October 1711, issue 2053.

instead directed towards the Duke of Marlborough who would soon be dismissed from his offices. Accounts relating to the expedition were sent by Dudley, whilst Francis Nicholson presented himself to the Board of Trade and Plantations in January 1712, but little was investigated until the fall of the Tories in 1714.⁶² Of course, the fight against France, despite the significant progress in negotiating an advantageous peace, was ongoing and this took priority with both the administration and the public.

The only reaction of the Cabinet was to give orders to put what was left of Walker's stores ashore at Portsmouth and to decommission the hired transports.⁶³ Commissary Netmaker's job was not finished, however, as he was still responsible for the stores. He had to inspect and find warehouses for them, especially given that a fair proportion of stores 'may be damaged, as having been long aboard leaky ships, and in bad weather'.⁶⁴ The soldiers of the regiments were given their marching orders and were distributed across the country to begin recruiting.⁶⁵ Upon their immediate arrival, however, they were given 'refreshment' in port and 'the surrounding towns and villages', having been 'so long on shipboard'.⁶⁶ The same applied to the horses.⁶⁷ King, as a valued engineer, was sent on to Gibraltar.⁶⁸

Walker and Hill were given further military duties almost immediately, showing that they retained the confidence of the ministry. Walker's authority remained intact as he served on a court-martial in December 1711, a court which

⁶² Maxwell Lyte, *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations*, II, 1709-1715, Dudley to Board, 13 November 1711, [Journal book P.64-67] p. 328.

⁶³ SRO, D742/U/1/47, Cabinet minutes, 12 October 1711; TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Commissioners of Transports, 12 October 1711.

⁶⁴ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Netmaker, 2 November 1711.

⁶⁵ TNA, WO 5/17; *The Journals of the House of Commons*, (London, 1803), XVII, 1711-1714, p. 63, 2 February 1712.

⁶⁶ TNA, WO 4/12, Granville to governor's of Portsmouth and Plymouth, and the lieutenant-governor of Pendennis, 9 October 1711.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Granville to Hill, 9 October 1711.

⁶⁸ TNA, SP 44/111, St John to Ordnance, 25 October 1711.

acquitted Captain Rouzier of endangering the Baltic trade when a strong Danish squadron broke his convoy.⁶⁹ Walker was then assigned a new command. In response to Jamaica's request for protection against French privateers, Walker was sent to command the Jamaica squadron in 1712 where Cassard had managed to avoid him.⁷⁰ Walker's flagship was the *Monmouth* which had formed part of his Canada squadron.⁷¹ On his outward voyage, the Admiral escorted 100 merchant ships for the trade in Portugal and the West Indies.⁷²

Walker set to work in the Caribbean by sending a ship to reconnoitre enemy ports; however, a hurricane struck and several of his squadron ran aground, losing their masts.⁷³ The Admiral then became embroiled in petty arguments with Governor Hamilton of Jamaica, an ex-naval captain.⁷⁴ The war had created a deficiency of supplies in Jamaica and, consequently, Hamilton negotiated a six months' truce with the enemy to trade. Walker disagreed with this policy and continued to enforce wartime regulations. He consequently ignored some orders from the civilian council in response. These grievances were further indicative of the poor cooperation between colonial governors and British naval captains, where issues of command and authority were not sufficiently defined. This sort of quarrel was quite common as naval commanders including Benbow, Martin, Legge, Norbury, Lisle and Constable all engaged in arguments with colonial governors. Even the West Indies governors

⁶⁹ TNA, SP 42/68, Court martial, 28 December 1711. Rouzier had served with the expedition in the *Sunderland*, he was transferred in the Americas to the less prestigious *Sapphire*, perhaps in light of these accusations.

⁷⁰ Bourne, Ruth, *Queen Anne's Navy in the West Indies*, (New Haven, 1939), p. 106.

⁷¹ Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, p. 83.

⁷² Lediard, *The Naval History of England*, p. 859.

⁷³ BL, Add MSS 61589 ff. 208-212; *CSPC*, 1712-1714, pp. 65-66, no. 94.xv.(a), 'List of ships damaged by the hurricane (attended with an earthquake) in Port Royal harbour' (8 August 1712), 10 October 1712; Bourne, *Queen Anne's Navy in the West Indies*, pp. 253-254.

⁷⁴ TNA, CO 137/10 Parts 1 and 2, Hamilton's papers; TNA, SP 42/68, Walker's Jamaica journal, 8 July – 13 September 1712; Bourne, *Queen Anne's Navy in the West Indies*, p. 40.

themselves had serious disagreements with one another, such as Parke and Codrington, and Hamilton and Lowther.⁷⁵ Captains often received blame for their inability to counter the French maritime threat in the West Indies. Nevertheless, they did their utmost, especially as there were great financial incentives in capturing prizes.⁷⁶ Walker demonstrated his ability to operate independently far from home, but also the naval officer's trait of poor cooperation with the colonial administration, albeit one which was breaking the law. He commanded in these dangerous waters, safely securing the trade and capturing small prizes, until returning to Britain a year later in May 1713, after proclaiming the cessation of arms and the end of the war.⁷⁷ Clearly, Walker retained some personal influence as the next month saw him hearing petitions from the African Company about a new Bill which would affect the African trade.⁷⁸ Geoffrey Callender's assertion that the expedition ended Walker's career is therefore not true; it was the volatile political scene that followed the Hanoverian succession that eventually terminated it.⁷⁹

Whilst the Admiral undertook his duties, Hill was given command of the force that would occupy Dunkirk and became the port's governor, whilst Clayton was appointed governor of the citadel.⁸⁰ Hill arrived there in July 1712 and 'universal joy

⁷⁵ Bourne, *Queen Anne's Navy in the West Indies*, pp. 254-258 and chapter 7 *passim*; Harding, Richard, 'Sailors and Gentlemen of Parade: Some Professional and Technical Problems Concerning the Conduct of Combined Operations in the Eighteenth Century', *The Historical Journal*, vol. XXXII, no. 1, (March, 1989), p. 40.

⁷⁶ Bourne, *Queen Anne's Navy in the West Indies*, pp. 106-107.

⁷⁷ Walker's Jamaica correspondence is held in TNA, ADM 1/230; TNA, ADM 1/577. Lediard, *The Naval History of England*, II, p. 859; Campbell and Kent, *Biographia Nautica*, V, p. 137; *CSPC*, 1712-1714, pp. 195-196, no. 388, Hamilton to Council of Trade and Plantations, 11 July 1713.

⁷⁸ Historical Manuscripts Commission (hereafter cited as HMC), *The Manuscripts of the House of Lords*, vol. X, 1712-1714 (London, 1953), p. 173.

⁷⁹ Callender, Geoffrey, *The Naval Side of British History*, (London, 1924), p. 159.

⁸⁰ Dalton, Charles, (ed.), *English Army Lists and Commission Registers, 1661-1714*, (London, 1894-1904), VI, pp. 183-184.

spread over [Britain], this event being looked on as the certain forerunner of peace'.⁸¹ Dunkirk's fortifications were to be dismantled, as agreed with the French in the peace negotiations, as the naval port remained a serious threat to Britain due to its close proximity. However, complete demolition did not occur, despite what much of the historiography states. Some demolition work had begun at an extremely slow pace, whilst other improvements were simultaneously being made to the fortifications. Work had ultimately ceased with the shifting alliances with the French and Spanish, leading to the Quadruple Alliance.

With the French becoming British allies under the regency of the Duke of Orleans, their non-committal attitude to the 1715 Jacobite uprising made relations more cordial, whilst Spain became a more assertive European power. Britain needed to remain on friendly terms with France after Utrecht and used Dunkirk as a bargaining chip in future negotiations, whilst the opposition party would naturally always complain about the threat it posed.⁸² Whilst Clyde L. Grose has remarked that Dunkirk was dismantled immediately by the 'youthful and efficient' Hill, John Robert Moore has pointed out that only limited demolition work actually occurred.⁸³ Moore was very critical of Hill's military capabilities and declared it was just the ministry's way of covering the Quebec fiasco. This was unfair, as his actions at Almansa and Mons demonstrated Hill had the ability to command and act honourably, yet it is undeniable that he was at Dunkirk purely for political reasons, probably, as Moore

⁸¹ Moore, John Robert, 'Defoe, Steele, and the Demolition of Dunkirk', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. XIII, no. 3, (May, 1950), p. 287; HMC, *House of Lords*, X, p. xvi. Swift, Jonathan, *The History of the Four Last Years of the Queen*, (London, 1758), p. 336.

⁸² Moore, 'Defoe, Steele, and the Demolition of Dunkirk', pp. 290-291, 296; Rodger, N.A.M., 'The Continental Commitment in the Eighteenth Century', in Freedman, Lawrence; Hates, Paul; and O'Neill, Robert, (eds), *War, Strategy and International Politics*, (Oxford, 1992) p. 40.

⁸³ Grose, Clyde, L., 'England and Dunkirk', *The American Historical Review*, vol. XXXVIX, no. 1, (October, 1933), p. 27; Moore, 'Defoe, Steele, and the Demolition of Dunkirk', pp. 279-280. Swaine, S. A., 'The English Acquisition and Loss of Dunkirk', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, New Series, vol. 1 (1883-1884), p. 116, is also incorrect.

stated, to deflect any criticism of the expedition's failure. Nevertheless, the Dunkirk project was never taken seriously by either the French or the British, and this extended into the pro-French policies under Prime Minister Robert Walpole. Moore stated that Hill returned to London after only three months 'for the alleged recovery of his health'; he may have had a fear of the notorious 'Dunkirk fever'.⁸⁴ However, Moore did not note that Hill later returned to oversee the work because the French were being obstructive. Hill had to tread a diplomatic line between the British and French, and it was political procrastination that ensured that the fortifications at Dunkirk were still debated in Parliament in the 1730s.⁸⁵

Hill may have regarded military service as a necessary evil to attain office, as perhaps indicated by his letter to St John, after leaving Boston, begging to return home after completing his duty. Hill's promotion to major-general in 1712 and his appointments as governor of Dunkirk, privy councillor and lieutenant-general of the ordnance were his first steps towards high office in London – roles which he may have been more comfortable with than tactical command. Hill stood down from his parliamentary seat in 1713, possibly in the hope of being elevated to the peerage in the manner of his brother-in-law, Samuel, Baron Masham – Abigail's husband.⁸⁶ Masham was created a Tory peer simply to force the peace preliminaries through Parliament which had been opposed by the Whigs. This came at the same time that Marlborough was stripped of his command; he later fled into a brief exile. With the collapse of the ministry after the Queen's death in 1714, Hill lost all of his offices

⁸⁴ Scouller, R. E., *The Armies of Queen Anne*, (Oxford, 1966), p. 246.

⁸⁵ HMC, *House of Lords*, X, pp. xvii-xviii, and various correspondence between Northern Secretary William Bromley and Hill, *ibid.*, pp. 287-291; Simms, Brendan, *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire*, (London, 2008), pp. 216-217.

⁸⁶ Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, V, p. 163, n. 97; VI, pp. 19, 43 n. 6 and 183; Harris, Frances, 'Samuel Masham (1678/9–1758)' contained in 'Masham, Abigail, Lady Masham (1670?–1734)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter cited as *ODNB*), (Oxford, 2004).

and, if it was ambition that drove him, it was here extinguished. Although he was not persecuted under the Whigs – his commission as a major-general was renewed – he nevertheless sold his regiment, never to attain office or command again. Hill became friends with Swift and must have been regarded as a man of intelligence and wit, as he was elected to the Brothers' Club along with Colonel Disney.⁸⁷ This Society of Brothers was St John's answer to the Whig Kit-Cat Club and excluded Harley, although it was primarily concerned with dining and pleasure rather than business.⁸⁸ It is a distinct possibility that this was the sort of life Hill would rather have had, and was perhaps content with his early retirement and his sister's loss of influence.

The expedition has been criticised for the withdrawal of five regiments from Flanders in Marlborough's final campaign, who himself disapproved of sending an expedition in 1710 because of this issue.⁸⁹ The Whigs would certainly have opposed the expedition as the Flanders army had been left weakened for the 1711 campaign. These Quebec regiments were fairly weakly manned given that some of Colonel Grant's soldiers were redistributed amongst the others, whilst those remaining stayed in Britain, so in effect only four continental battalions actually accompanied the expedition. Marlborough, however, was able to find replacement regiments from Germany, albeit during the summer.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, he was still thirty battalions weaker than the previous year, but this owes more to the need to garrison twenty-five of them at Aire, Bethune, Douai and St Venant, which he had captured in 1710. Marlborough judged that he would need a 'favourable opportunity' to attack the

⁸⁷ Swift, *Journal to Stella*, Letter XXXV, 29 November 1711, p. 348.

⁸⁸ Holmes, Geoffrey, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, (second edition, London, 1987), pp. 21, 296-297.

⁸⁹ Snyder, Henry, L., *The Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, (Oxford, 1975), III, p. 1484, Marlborough to Godolphin, 5 May 1710.

⁹⁰ Murray, George, (ed.), *The Letters and Dispatches of John Churchill, First Duke of Marlborough, from 1702 to 1712*, (London, 1845), V, p. 388, Marlborough to St John, 22 June 1711.

French, as they were deemed stronger than in 1710 and the allies were in ‘no condition to undertake any siege’.⁹¹ The withdrawal of five regiments was insignificant by comparison and would have had very little impact upon Marlborough’s campaign, which was quite successful in any case. In terms of numbers of troops available to conduct offensive operations, Marlborough was more a victim of his own success, from the previous year’s campaign, than the political machinations of St John.

Oxford, meanwhile, was supplanted in the Queen’s favour by St John when he was created Viscount Bolingbroke, but his good fortune would not last long.⁹² When the Whigs returned to power, with the accession of the House of Hanover, they examined ways of punishing the Tories for imposing a dishonourable peace. Bolingbroke consequently fled to France to enter the service of the Pretender as his secretary of state. Perhaps consistently, with the failure of the 1715 rebellion, the Pretender blamed Bolingbroke for not sending enough supplies.⁹³ The Whigs, meanwhile, tried to taint Oxford by accusing him of profiting from the Quebec expedition, of which he was guiltless, and from weakening Marlborough’s army.⁹⁴ Oxford opted to face his accusers at his impeachment rather than flee. After all, the Whigs were pursuing the wrong man, as Oxford had pointed out it was Bolingbroke who was responsible. The financial discrepancies arising from the expedition were

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 363, Marlborough to Raby, 1 June 1711.

⁹² Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, p. 205; Biddle, *Bolingbroke and Harley*, pp. 257-258; HMC, *Portland*, V, p. 465, ‘The Earl of Oxford’s Account of Public Affairs’, St John sulked at not being made an earl.

⁹³ Plumb, J. H., *The First Four Georges*, (London, 2000), p. 45; Dickinson, H. T., ‘St John, Henry, styled first Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751)’, *ODNB*.

⁹⁴ Cobbett, *The Parliamentary History of England*, VII, cols. 114-115, ‘Further articles of impeachment’, 30 July 1715; *The Journals of the House of Commons*, XVIII, 1714-1718, pp. 244-245, also in Graham, ‘The Walker Expedition to Quebec’, pp. 408-410; Harley was ‘incorruptible’, Holmes, Geoffrey, ‘Harley, St John and the Death of the Tory Party’, in Holmes, Geoffrey (ed.), *Britain After the Glorious Revolution, 1689-1714*, (London, 1969), p. 218.

traced to a sum of £28,036 5s for the poor quality clothing and stores. This was the exact sum of Blake's contract for the expedition. They were also part of the missing figures in the 'summary of extraordinary charges of war' that were not vetted through Parliament.⁹⁵ These sums were huge and additionally, it was later estimated that it cost £42,954 18s 4d to pay for Hill's regulars alone whilst serving on the expedition.⁹⁶

St John asked Oxford to settle Blake's charges in the summer of 1711, but he was not told what they were for. It was only when the Queen signed a warrant in June 1711 was it paid. Oxford realised that this sum related to the expedition on its return in October.⁹⁷ However, he discovered that the supplies had only cost £7,000 and he presumed that the balance was split between Bolingbroke and Arthur Moore⁹⁸ (a merchant and trade commissioner).⁹⁹ Oxford answered these charges with the truth; he was not in favour of the expedition, did not organise it, nor did he pocket any public funds. He too was suspicious of the sum in question and wanted to investigate at the time, but was overruled by the Queen.¹⁰⁰ However, he did try to suppress it from parliamentary examination, perhaps to keep his ministry intact.¹⁰¹ Oxford, after

⁹⁵ 'There are some other extraordinary expenses for the expedition to Canada which are not inserted in this estimate by reason the same cannot yet be exactly adjusted, the account thereof being not yet transmitted', TNA, SP 41/4/208, 'An account of some extraordinary charges of war'.

⁹⁶ Shaw, William, A., *Calendar of Treasury Books*, (London, 1952), XXV, 1711, pp. cciii-ccvi), also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', pp. 48-50.

⁹⁷ Cobbett, *The Parliamentary History of England*, VI, col. ccxlv.

⁹⁸ Also accused of profiteering in other ventures, Thompson, Edward H., 'Moore, Arthur (d. 1730)', *ODNB*; Churchill, *Marlborough: His Life and Time*, p. 397; Clark, George, *The Later Stuarts, 1660-1714*, (Oxford, 1965), p. 247, n. 2; Hill, Brian, W., *Robert Harley: Speaker, Secretary of State and Premier Minister*, (New Haven and London, 1988), p. 195.

⁹⁹ HMC, *Portland*, V, p. 465, 'The Earl of Oxford's Account of Public Affairs'; Harvey, Edward Léon, 'The Letters and Accounts of James Brydges, 1705-1713', *The Huntington Library Bulletin*, no. 2 (November, 1931), p. 131. Blake had also been a witness against suppliers of bad biscuits to the navy, whom they defrauded of £1.5 million, TNA, ADM 1/4094/244, William Gard to George Tilson,, 30 November 1710. It is to be assumed that he also unduly profited from St John's contract.

¹⁰⁰ Cobbett, *The Parliamentary History of England*, VII, cols. 188-189, 'Answer to the further articles of impeachment', 7 September 1715; *The Journals of the House of Commons*, XVIII, p. 315 also in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', pp. 410-413; Dickinson, H. T., 'Henry St. John: A Reappraisal of the Young Bolingbroke', *The Journal of British Studies*, vol. VII, no. 2 (May, 1968), p. 50.

¹⁰¹ Cobbett, *The Parliamentary History of England*, VI, col. ccxlv.

serving many months in the Tower of London, was finally acquitted in 1717.¹⁰²

Despite some historians claiming that the expedition was Harley's project, it was clear that he deeply opposed it.¹⁰³ Confusion about his role probably extends from Oxford's impeachment which accused him of organising the expedition and St John's early correspondence with him (asking for funds), which described the expedition as 'our' project to try and secure his support.¹⁰⁴ Oxford faced down his accusers, if Bolingbroke had been in Britain, he would have clearly been an easy target for the Whigs bent on taking their revenge.

Hill was never caught up in any of these recriminations, despite the Whig purges of the army.¹⁰⁵ It may have been realised that he was simply a Tory pawn and not worth pursuing. However, one account may be suggestive of Hill's possible Jacobite tendencies, when in 1717 it was rumoured 'Bolingbroke... [was] positively said to be...at General Hill's house...where many others are often in the night'.¹⁰⁶ However, it was at this time that Bolingbroke was supposedly in exile. Hill was also in communication with Sophia, Electress of Hanover, before the death of Anne, when he briefly summarised the political scene in England and his support for her succession.¹⁰⁷ This suggests that, in true Marlburian style, he was securing his position in the eventuality that either a Hanoverian or a Stuart ascended the throne. Any further political activity remains unknown. It was likely that he lived the rest of

¹⁰² Biddle, *Bolingbroke and Harley*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰³ St John has escaped the blame for organising the expedition in favour of Harley, notably in Callender, G. A. R., (ed.); Martin-Leake, Stephen 'The Life of Admiral Sir John Leake', II, *Navy Records Society*, vol. LIII, p. 365 n. 2; and Bourne, *Queen Anne's Navy in the West Indies*, p. 258.

¹⁰⁴ Cobbett, *The Parliamentary History of England*, VII, col. 114; HMC, *Portland*, IV, p. 652, St John to Harley, 8 January 1711.

¹⁰⁵ Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, p. 28.

¹⁰⁶ HMC, *Calendar of the Stuart Papers*, (London, 1912), V, p. 236, 14 November 1717.

¹⁰⁷ BL, Stowe 226 f. 385, Hill to Sophia, 6 April 1714.

his life in quiet comfort at his estate and his London house – in stark contrast to Walker – until his death in 1735.¹⁰⁸

II: Walker's Fall from Grace

The 1714 accession of George I to the British throne did not serve to create trouble for Walker immediately, although his suspected Tory connections eventually escalated suspicions of Jacobitism against him, forcing him to flee. Walker was one of three admirals to be dismissed from the service in 1715 and struck off the half-pay list.¹⁰⁹ The other two were Sir James Wishart and Sir Edward Whitaker. John Charnock says of the latter:

he was deprived [of his pension] on the accession of King George the First, and that complete political change which took place immediately afterwards. This extended even to the [dismissal] of persons, whose long and eminent services, intrinsic worth, and noble conduct justly entitled them to the praise, friendship, and the protection of Englishmen of all parties; so that the treatment is not to be considered, as it would be in common cases, a mark of infamy or public disgrace.¹¹⁰

Charnock's defence should also be applied to Walker as he suffered a similar fate. Admiralty Secretary Josiah Burchett sent Walker a letter in November 1714 which initiated all of his troubles, asking yet again why he charged the Navy Board so much for stores at Boston.¹¹¹ The new Whig ministry desired revenge against the Tories, but petitions from New England merchants, concerning unpaid bills for the Quebec

¹⁰⁸ Spain, 'Hill, John', *ODNB*.

¹⁰⁹ Robert Beatson, *A Political Index to the Histories of Great Britain and Ireland*, (London, 1788), I, p. 316.

¹¹⁰ Charnock, John, *Biographia Navalis*, (London, 1796), II, p. 374.

¹¹¹ TNA, ADM 1/577, Walker to Burchett, 4 December 1714.

expedition, were also accumulating.¹¹² Therefore, when the new administration was looking for ammunition against the expedition, the only aspect that they felt could be investigated was Walker's expenditure at Boston, amounting to £1,000. Had St John equipped him properly then no charge may have been found. Walker's actions on the St Lawrence were not criticised or thought worthy of investigation, neither was the decision to return home.

Burchett required a copy of Walker's instructions as he said there were none in his office. Accordingly, Walker pointed out that 'fifty or sixty officers in all, were obliged to deliver their journals of the voyage, before they could receive any of their pay'. Having already given evidence in 1713, Walker was taken aback. It took him some time to find the relevant journals and letters that he possessed to resubmit them as evidence.¹¹³ He wondered where his letters and accounts, which he sent to the Admiralty in 1711, had disappeared to: 'have the cooks of Mr. Secretary [Burchett], and his clerks, made use of them all for their Christmas pies and apple tarts?'¹¹⁴ Little did he know the long-term consequences of the essential spending of Admiralty funds at Boston to provision the fleet.¹¹⁵ After all, Walker drew attention to the fact that Wheler, on his 1693 expedition, had received £2,000 for such contingencies.¹¹⁶ Walker's suspicions were aroused when his London attorney, who took care of his pay, told the Admiral not to contact him. He immediately departed for London where Walker found that his half-pay had stopped and a newspaper had reported his

¹¹² Redington, Joseph, (ed.), *Calendar of Treasury Papers*, V, 1714-1719, (London, 1883), no. 9, Ordinance to Treasury, 22 March 1715, vol. clxxxix, p. 92.

¹¹³ Walker's letters and copies of orders and accounts sent to Burchett are in TNA, ADM 1/230.

¹¹⁴ Walker, 'Journal', introduction, p. 67.

¹¹⁵ TNA, SP 44/111, St John to Treasury, 2 October 1711.

¹¹⁶ Walker, 'Journal', p. 105, 28 June 1711.

arrest.¹¹⁷ After this was published, the inevitable rumours and accusations began, and Walker decided to flee. Not, he stressed, to serve a foreign nation, where British naval officers were highly regarded,¹¹⁸ but to Carolina, where he could remain a subject of King George (but as far away from London as this would allow).

The Evening Post reported in January 1716 that Walker had arrived at Charlestown, South Carolina, the previous October.¹¹⁹ Walker's experience in Carolina has hitherto remained hidden, but he was very much involved in a rebellion in 1719 against proprietary government. The South Carolinians were concerned about Spanish encroachments and the colonial government's corrupt self-interest. A Convention against the lawful government of the colony staged a bloodless coup when the militia sided with the rebels.¹²⁰ One official deposed by these events wrote: 'Sir Hovenden Walker has been one of the chief incendiaries, and it is by his scheme that they model their present government. He is made president of their council'.¹²¹ The usurpers placed the colony under the direct authority of the British government and London subsequently approved their actions, which coincidentally saw the installation of Nicholson as the first royal governor there.¹²² This proves how active

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, introduction, p. 69; *British Weekly Mercury*, 11-18 June 1715, issue 520; *Weekly Packet*, 11-18 June 1715, issue 154. *Weekly Journal*, 18 June 1715, also reported that there will be a 'great reform' of the officers in the Guards regiments and also new justices of the peace being appointed throughout Britain.

¹¹⁸ Such as Captain Paddon, Warner, Richard H., 'Paddon, George (bap. 1670, d. 1719)', *ODNB*.

¹¹⁹ *The Evening Post*, 19-21 January 1716, issue 1008.

¹²⁰ 'It was a well-planned and well-executed coup against a legally constituted government', Edgar, Walter, *South Carolina: A History*, (Columbia (SC), 1998), p. 107; Hewat, Alexander, *An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Colonies of South Carolina and Georgia*, (London, 1779), p. 275.

¹²¹ Redington, *Calendar of Treasury Papers*, V, 1714-1719, vol. ccxxiii, pp. 487-488, no. 16, letter from Colonel Rhett, 21 December 1719. Rhett had called for action against the rebels, Edgar, Walter, *South Carolina: A History*, p.108, but then joined them when they were in the ascendant, Hewat, *An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Colonies of South Carolina and Georgia*, p. 283.

¹²² Edgar, *South Carolina: A History*, p.109; Osgood, *The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century*, II, p. 361; Webb, Stephen Saunders, 'The Strange Career of Francis Nicholson', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third series, vol. XXIII, no. 4 (October, 1966), p. 547. He had previously

and belligerent Walker could be and shows a great independence of mind in difficult circumstances. He formed part of the rebellion despite the fact his entire situation had recently altered as Secretary Burchett re-established links with Walker and helped him to claim his back-pay.¹²³ This cleared the way for Walker's return to England to be exonerated.

Burchett was an interesting figure. In a climate of momentous change, the Admiralty Secretary was a constant as he held the post for almost fifty years until 1742.¹²⁴ Despite being a Whig member of Parliament for the majority of his career, he survived the political turbulence of the Tory years and was the only member of the Admiralty Commission not to be replaced in 1714 – the first cull of the commission since 1679.¹²⁵ Burchett's access to such a vast wealth of information regarding the rise of English maritime power enabled him to write *A Complete History of the Most Remarkable Transactions at Sea* in 1720, the first general naval history written in the English language. He probably knew more about naval affairs than the Lord Commissioners of the Admiralty themselves.¹²⁶ This was the man with whom Walker corresponded on both occasions when the Admiralty required him to provide details of his Boston expenses. The first was shortly after the expedition and not followed by any charges, but rather a new command; the second was once the Whigs assumed

replaced Vetch as the governor of Nova Scotia, Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers*, VI, p. 192, n. 20.

¹²³ Walker resigned as president of the council perhaps due to a disagreement, however, he was also looking at returning to England, Hewat, *An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Colonies of South Carolina and Georgia*, p. 286.

¹²⁴ Sainty, J. C., *Office-Holders in Modern Britain, Volume 4: Admiralty Officials 1660-1870*, (London, 1975), pp. 34-37.

¹²⁵ James, G. F., 'Secretary to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, 1695-1742', *The Mariner's Mirror*, vol. XXIII, (1937), pp. 488-490.

¹²⁶ 'Whosoever cons the ship of the Admiralty, the Secretary is always at the helm. He knows all the reaches, buoys and shelves of the river of Parliament, and knows how to steer clear of them all. He is the spring that moves the clockwork of the whole Board, the oracle that is to be consulted on all occasions'. *Remarks on the Present Condition of the Navy* (1700) cited in James, 'Secretary to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty', p. 488.

power, who seemingly wanted to implicate a greedy and corrupt Tory Walker in a badly executed mission to the detriment of British interests. Burchett's demands on behalf of the Admiralty, for Walker to provide evidence, led to the fit of hysteria when the Admiral fled to the colonies.

However, in 1719 Burchett began assisting Walker's wife and friends in an effort to restore his half-pay, and corresponded with the Admiral himself.¹²⁷ In his book, Burchett was notably defensive of Walker.¹²⁸ Burchett was the one man in the Admiralty who really knew all of the office's little secrets and it must have been flattering for Walker to be exonerated by such a man. However, Walker did not miss the opportunity to remonstrate with Burchett as he believed, 'had you used your endeavour at a proper time my affairs would not have been reduced to this extremity'.¹²⁹ It was all the more scandalous that Burchett had met with Walker prior to his sailing for Quebec and agreed that he was allowed £1,000 for contingencies – which was the focus of the investigation into Walker.¹³⁰ This would suggest that he had been persecuted for purely political, rather than operational, reasons. Obviously, Burchett's political flexibility assured his longevity in office, but Walker's case must have weighed heavily upon his conscience. The award of Walker's half-pay did not amount to much, as it was the sum that he would have received from the time when he was struck off the half-pay list until the beginning of his self-imposed exile – a matter of weeks.

Significantly, a similar occurrence, in 1749, regarding naval funds issued without proof of vouchers resulted in an investigation examining the results of similar

¹²⁷ TNA, ADM 1/577, Walker to Burchett, 10 September 1719.

¹²⁸ Burchett, *A Complete History of the Most Remarkable Transactions at Sea*, p. 778.

¹²⁹ TNA, ADM 1/577, Walker to Burchett, 10 September 1719.

¹³⁰ Walker, 'Journal', 10 April 1711, p. 92.

cases. An investigator researching precedents in Royal Navy cases sent a letter to the Admiralty listing five other situations and their outcomes, including that of Walker in 1711:

Sir Hovenden Walker by order of the 19 January 1713 allowed on his accounts £1,013 s2 d2 without producing vouchers, it being impossible for him to produce any, in regards all the accounts and papers relating thereto were blown up in the *Edgar* at Spithead where she returned home, and that Mr Weston [Walker's deputy treasurer] who had the charge of the money had made oath to the expense thereof on His Majesty's service.¹³¹

Being absolved of this issue, Walker needed to return to England before he could be awarded any half-pay in order to prove he was still alive. Whilst completing his affairs in South Carolina he wrote to the Admiralty of his poor predicament. Walker had complained of living off 'corn and potatoes (because I could not afford to buy plumb cake in London)'. He also stated, given a command, he would have '[extirpated] ...the [Spanish] pirates, which have done a great deal of mischief to all the [American] settlements'. Walker hoped to discuss such a stratagem on his return to London. This document seems to be the basis for the publication of his journal which he hoped would clear his name in the eyes of the public. In it, Walker was very critical of St John, but without naming him and explained that the 'last ministry of the late reign, did not themselves, like an ass milling upon thistles, think fit in any public manner to bite me, for fear of pricking their own guns, and making them bleed, and therefore I escaped them.'¹³² Walker 'bought' a sloop to sail to England, but had to

¹³¹ National Maritime Museum, ADM B 142, Navy Office to Admiralty, 5 October 1749.

¹³² TNA, ADM 1/577, Walker to Admiralty and Burchett, 11 September 1719.

put in at Jamaica because of the stormy weather.¹³³ Walker eventually responded to his critics in 1720, when he published *A Journal: or Full Account of the Late Expedition to Canada*. He utilised the newspapers to advertise it upon his vindication in 1719.¹³⁴ Besides containing his private journal and correspondence covering the event in question, his introduction sets his main case for his defence, summarised hereafter. Walker must have compiled the *Journal* in the West Indies as he was reported to have returned from his uncomfortable colonial life to England on a sloop from Jamaica in August 1721.¹³⁵

Walker had cause for much complaint about his poor treatment as he came from an age when maritime disasters were a common occurrence. His introduction subtly alluded to Admiral Shovell's destruction on the Scilly Isles in 1707 and to the wrecking of the *Coronation* at Plymouth in 1691.¹³⁶ Walker did not name the commanders responsible for those events so that he could not be critical of those 'great men...for I know time and chance happen to all'. He was also aware that other naval officers got into trouble for acquiring victuals in the Mediterranean, despite this occurring when it was absolutely necessary for the wellbeing of their squadrons. Walker had expected to receive criticism for the expedition, but was greatly surprised that the Admiralty treated him so badly, especially as this occurred four years after the event and particularly as he had served alongside or under most of those sitting on the Board. His striking-off the half pay list in 1715 without the opportunity to defend himself was, he claimed, without precedent. He did not steal money or supplies, all

¹³³ *Ibid.*, Walker to Burchett, 12 November 1720.

¹³⁴ *The Daily Post*, 12 December 1719, issue 61 reports the publication of Walker's journal in 1719, although all known copies were published in 1720.

¹³⁵ *The Post-Boy*, 12-15 August 1721, issue 5002.

¹³⁶ Harris, Simon, *Sir Cloudesley Shovell, Stuart Admiral*, (Staplehurst, 2001), pp. 343-353 and Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail*, p. 34.

bills and accounts were signed and, with the loss of the *Edgar* along with his papers, Walker had to spend a great deal of time filling the gap in the paperwork through memory.

Walker asked: ‘what then is my crime?’ The expedition was not his idea and he was appointed to command it long after the force began assembling. Nicholson was required to prepare everything well beforehand at Boston, and Walker used monies there in the manner allowed by his rank and St John’s instructions. Pointing out that he did not eat all of the provisions himself, or use the stores to ‘build houses and coaches’, then he cannot be accused of profiteering. The expedition was also not the only one to be dispatched that ‘desired success’. Whereas ships and men were lost ‘in the Channel and upon our own coasts...under...the most expert and best of our sea officers’, Walker’s were lost in an ‘unknown navigation’ and did not include naval vessels. He declared the obvious – he could not control the weather, nor would he whip up storms just for the ‘pleasure of doing mischief’ if he had such power. He declared his party neutrality, having never received particular favour from either Tory or Whig, and that he had no choice in any of his commands but was nevertheless happy to do his duty. Walker protested that he was not a Tory and his promotion to flag-rank was due to his seniority rather than factional favour. Whilst he was not compensated for the loss of his belongings aboard the *Edgar*, despite personally petitioning the Queen, Walker was nevertheless given a new command. He had not received any office or post other than what he was accustomed to in the navy and had not profited as he could not even afford to live in London.

Walker's loyalty was clearly important to him. He offered his long service, his time as a prisoner in France,¹³⁷ and his loyalty to Britain as his defence. Like other purged naval officers, he did not offer his skilled services to the navies of other nations.¹³⁸ Walker even declared that he would happily have retired on a pension if his services were no longer required. When the Admiralty had struck him off the list of flag officers he continued to serve as a justice of the peace in Huntingdonshire, where his colleagues treated him with civility. Walker's devotion to service was illustrated in his account of the dangerous nature of his voyages to the West Indies, where sailors often succumbed to terrible diseases and where captains would often lay down their commands rather than serve in such an appalling environment.¹³⁹ Walker never declined the service, but took the fight across the Atlantic unlike many of the more famous naval commanders of his age.

Walker also made clear that he agreed with the aims of the expedition, which would have given advantage to Britain, and he alleged that he made proposals for other American expeditions when the Whigs were in power.¹⁴⁰ However, he argued that only Bolingbroke could judge whether he acted appropriately. Oxford was also mentioned in Walker's introduction because of his opposition to the project. The Oxford ministry did him 'no good' and 'no harm' and a 'thousand living witnesses' could attest to the truth of his journal.¹⁴¹ Walker praised both George I and the memory of William III, possibly to counter rumours of his political sympathies. He also condemned the newspapers, particularly the *Post-Man* and the *Gazette*, for

¹³⁷ The details surrounding Walker's prison life are unknown.

¹³⁸ For example, captain's John Perry (gaining his seniority on the same day as Walker) and George Paddon (Walker's flag-captain on the *Edgar*) entering the service of Peter the Great.

¹³⁹ Walker, 'Journal', introduction, pp. 57-63.

¹⁴⁰ This is the only recorded instance of this.

¹⁴¹ Walker, 'Journal', introduction, p. 72.

obfuscating the expedition's story by not detailing the 'desperate navigation' of the St Lawrence, or the loss of the *Feversham* and its transports. This meant that they only had food for six to nine weeks and hence, Walker thought, he would have to wait ten months (an exaggeration) for further provisions. 'By the loss of part, Providence saved all the rest' he concluded, perhaps accurately. Whilst condemning the armchair generals of the period, he then outlined every possible deadly outcome had the expedition continued and been stranded at Quebec in the midst of winter. Walker even defended the pilots, whom he acknowledged could not take full responsibility for guiding a fleet through an area they were unfamiliar with, especially one as hazardous as the St Lawrence. He also compared himself with Phips, who met disaster when retreating down the St Lawrence, but in stark contrast to Walker, was still applauded. After offering some sardonic advice to other captains who might be chosen for such expeditions, Walker explained why his version of events was not published sooner, particularly his having been 'disturbed' in Carolina and his consequent displacement to Barbados.¹⁴² His final words condemned the Admiralty for mislaying the accounts relating to the expedition and that they should remember 'they took away my half-pay, and made me angry first, and that losers... always have had leave to speak'.¹⁴³

Walker was completely exonerated of all wrongdoing on his return from exile. He was even introduced to King George by the Earl of Lincoln, where he kissed hands in September 1721, possibly resulting from the publication of his *Journal*.¹⁴⁴ The Prince of Wales also 'gave him a very gracious reception' and the Whig ministry

¹⁴² The details of Walker's time in Barbados are not known.

¹⁴³ If, due 'to the jollities of Christmas and Easter feasts [Burchett had not] carelessly mislaid' Walker's papers then his life would not have been so unfortunate. Walker 'Journal', introduction, p. 81.

¹⁴⁴ *The Post-Boy*, 2-5 September 1721, issue 5011.

‘seemed to look on him, with a favourable eye’.¹⁴⁵ Such preferment did not extend to the employment that Walker then desired. The naval chronicler, Thomas Lediard, met Walker in Hamburg and Hanover in 1725, gaining a favourable impression of him: ‘I found him a gentleman of letters, good understanding, ready wit, and agreeable conversation; and withal the most abstemious man living; for I never saw or heard that he drank anything but water, or [ate] anything but vegetables.’¹⁴⁶ However, this may be indicative of Walker’s desperate financial situation. During the 1720’s, Walker made attempts to recoup further monies that he believed to be owed him and even applied for positions in the navy despite a decade’s absence. In 1722, he wrote to the Admiralty asking for a pension equal to the half-pay of a rear-admiral.¹⁴⁷ The following January he applied for the post of comptroller of the navy on the death of the incumbent.¹⁴⁸ Not long before his own death, Walker was clearly desperate and even attempted to claim some money he believed was due to him from 1703 whilst at Guadeloupe. He had noticed after perusing his accounts that he had identified some claims that he maintained were not paid: ‘how it came to pass that I never applied for such allowance sooner, I know not’. He also claimed forty-three days more half-pay as he believed the Admiralty had erroneously recorded 1 June 1715 as the date of his flight from England and not 14 July which was Walker’s calculation.¹⁴⁹ This would suggest that Walker did not receive the pension that he applied for and that he was gravely in need of even a few days’ extra pay.

Parker’s Penny Post of 19 January 1726 stated that Walker died ‘recently’ at his house in Dublin, coincidently a couple of paragraphs under news regarding the

¹⁴⁵ Lediard, *The Naval History of England*, II, p. 855.

¹⁴⁶ Lediard, *The Naval History of England*, II, p. 859.

¹⁴⁷ TNA, ADM 1/577, 23 April 1722, Walker to Burchett.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Walker to Burchett, 2 January 1723.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Walker to Burchett, 14 October 1725.

advancement of the careers of colonels Kane and Disney.¹⁵⁰ His sudden death in the land of his birth, so soon after numerous attempts at petitioning the Admiralty for money, suggests he may have died in poverty and he probably lived off the proceeds of his published *Journal*.¹⁵¹ Walker's movements in Germany were to perhaps find employment and favour with the House of Hanover. Whilst Walker was seemingly rehabilitated, his efforts at finding suitable employment came to nought. These endeavours may, however, have provided for his child in her time of need. Forty years after his death, Walker's only living descendant, his daughter Margaret, unmarried and childless, was given a £40 pension 'in consideration of her distress, and of being the daughter of Sir Hovenden Walker, formerly a rear-admiral'.¹⁵² This was some small tribute to the memory of a broken man.

III: The Path to Success

The task Walker was given in 1711 was achieved during his daughter's lifetime. After the Treaty of Utrecht, North America became increasingly important to British interests, although a strategic initiative did not materialise until the War of the Austrian Succession.¹⁵³ Britain's government of 1740 was clearly concerned about the strategic importance of Quebec as war with France looked a likely prospect. The

¹⁵⁰ *Parker's Penny Post*, 19 January 1726, issue 113.

¹⁵¹ His death did not take place in 1728 as is sometimes reported, for example, in Laughton, J. K., 'Walker, Hovenden (d. 1728)', *Dictionary of National Biography*, LIX, (Oxford, 1899), pp. 65-66; Syrett, David and DiNardo, R. L., (eds), 'The Commissioned Sea Officers of the Royal Navy, 1660-1815', *Navy Records Society*, Occasional publications vol. 1, (1994), p. 454 and by Graham, although he acknowledges that it was possibly 1725, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 52. Beatson, *A Political Index to the Histories of Great Britain and Ireland*, I, p. 316 and Laughton, J. K., and Davies, J. D. (rev.), 'Walker, Sir Hovenden (1666?-1725)', *ODNB*, records 24 December 1725, which is stated in TNA, ADM 6/424. The conflict between calendars suggests it was 1725 rather than 1726, however, the Harleian Society, vol. XLIX, (1901), 'Musgrave's Obituary', p. 185, states Walker's death occurred on 6 January 1726. *The Daily Post* of 2 January, 2 January 1727, issue 2270, reported that Walker died in January 1726.

¹⁵² *The St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post*, 5-8 September 1767, issue 1017.

¹⁵³ Gwyn, 'The Royal Navy in North America', p. 132.

southern secretary of state's office, under the Duke of Newcastle and future prime minister during Quebec's capture in 1759, conducted an investigation into previous expeditions. His office was clearly unimpressed by what it discovered with regards to the 1711 attempt, as few records could be found in relation to the expedition.¹⁵⁴ The secrecy surrounding the expedition had obviously permeated the administration of St John's office. Louisbourg was captured in 1745, during the War of the Austrian Succession, but was returned at the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748. During Louisbourg's brief occupation, the ministry was in disagreement over whether to follow it up with an attack on Quebec as the lessons of 1711 inclined them against acting.¹⁵⁵ In 1746, *The Dublin Journal*, in anticipation of Britain sending an expedition, printed an historical account of the 1711 expedition.¹⁵⁶ A force was fitted out, but not sent, as the politicians reverted to bickering about the advantages of a maritime versus continental war.¹⁵⁷ Also, the Lord Chancellor wrote to Newcastle informing him that it was too late in the year to begin preparations and that he was mostly concerned for success in Scotland against the Jacobite uprising.¹⁵⁸ Yet again the colonies needlessly answered the call to arms and had even raised 9,100 men for

¹⁵⁴ BL, Add MSS 32694/101-5 (Paper A), Newcastle papers, 1740; Boscawen, *The Capture of Louisbourg, 1758*, (awaiting publication), chapter 3.

¹⁵⁵ Buffinton, Arthur H., 'The Canada Expedition of 1746: Its Relation to British Politics', *The American Historical Review*, vol. XLV, no. 3 (April, 1940), p. 554; Harding, 'Sailors and Gentlemen of Parade', p. 38.

¹⁵⁶ The 1711 expedition had been Britain's 'only attempt to make conquests upon the French in America, disappointed by insuperable difficulties. It was 'the greatest reverse of fortune the English experienced during the whole war of Queen Anne', *The Dublin Journal*, 10-13 January 1746, issue 2069.

¹⁵⁷ Buffinton, 'The Canada Expedition of 1746', p. 558; Gwyn, 'The Royal Navy in North America', p.136.

¹⁵⁸ On his concern in sending a Quebec expedition, the Earl of Hardwicke wrote: 'after having in my own time, seen the fate of two such expeditions, as that under Sir Hovenden Walker, to this wry[?] country, and that lately, under Admiral Vernon, to the West Indies, I cannot raise my mind to any wry[?] sanguine hopes on the success of this', BL, Add MSS 32707 f. 5, Hardwicke to Newcastle, 2 April 1746.

the purpose.¹⁵⁹ The Canadians had actually attempted to retake Louisbourg, but a storm defeated their progress.¹⁶⁰ Britain had exploited neither Annapolis Royal, nor Newfoundland, as a strategic counter to Louisbourg. The French retention of Cape Breton Island at Utrecht caused this British headache. This meant that before Canada could be overcome, Louisbourg must be taken yet again.

Walker's expedition was naturally overshadowed by the success of 1759. Whilst 1711 probably did not offer any inspiration to those planning the Seven Years War, it was probable that they learnt from those mistakes and a blue-water policy was executed. Newcastle originally regarded William Pitt the Elder's ideas for global strategy as undesirable. This period was reminiscent of the old continental versus maritime debates. Pitt, nevertheless, was in the ascendant and effectively carried the war in the office of southern secretary.¹⁶¹ Issues of supply, navigation, secrecy and command had obviously been dealt with by 1759. Pitt, determined like St John to conquer Canada, was prepared to continue pouring resources into the North American theatre, as he possessed the strategic vision to realise that it takes time to see a project through. St John faced a different predicament as he was trying to end a war with a final coup and did not have the luxury to impose a time-consuming strategy.

The Seven Years War saw a protracted three-pronged approach over four campaigns, from 1757-1760, as part of a grand strategy which focused on Canada, which proved the death-knell for the French colony. This was illustrated by troop numbers where a massive 45,000 troops were stationed in America, as opposed to

¹⁵⁹ Chartrand, René, *Colonial American Troops, 1610-1774*, (Oxford, 2002), I, p. 33.

¹⁶⁰ Stanley, George F. G., 'The Canadian Militia During the Ancien Régime', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, vol. XXII, (1943/1944), p. 164.

¹⁶¹ Plumb, *The First Four Georges*, pp. 88-90.

10,000 that were fighting in Germany.¹⁶² One of the navy's main policies was also to maintain forces in North America, which deviated from the European-centric strategy of the later Stuarts.¹⁶³ The success against Quebec, therefore, came after years of prior effort and Wolfe's campaign in 1759 was not a lightning assault, but the culmination of a siege which lasted almost three months. The battle on the Plains of Abraham was the result of a last-ditch attempt at victory before the campaigning season dictated a withdrawal. Potentially, the capture of Quebec could still have resulted in failure as the French harried the British in 1760, until a fleet sailed up the St Lawrence to relieve the remainder of the army.¹⁶⁴

The fall of New France was only possible once Louisbourg was taken in 1758 and after the establishment of Halifax in Nova Scotia, which provided the British with their first true naval base in the region.¹⁶⁵ A follow-up attempt on Quebec was deemed unfeasible in early August 1758 owing to similar factors that affected the expedition of 1711. These included the limited duration of the campaigning season; the lack of supplies; ignorance of the navigation of the St Lawrence; and the provision of few experienced pilots. Admiral Edward Boscawen may have been thinking of Walker when he decided that the conquest of Louisbourg was more than enough compensation for one season's fighting.¹⁶⁶ With Boscawen refusing to sail up the St Lawrence, his fleet departed for Britain at around the same time as Walker left Boston

¹⁶² Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, p. 451, does make the point that 25,000 of the American troops were colonials, whilst Britain was funding a further 50,000 German troops on the continent. Nevertheless, this was a prime example of the success of a blue water strategy.

¹⁶³ Ireland, Bernard, *Naval Warfare in the Age of Sail: War at Sea, 1756-1815*, (London, 2001), p. 21.

¹⁶⁴ Gwyn, 'The Royal Navy in North America', p. 140; Manning, Stephen, *Quebec: The Story of Three Sieges*, (London; New York, 2009), p. 114.

¹⁶⁵ Gwyn, 'The Royal Navy in North America', p. 137; Harding, Richard, 'The Expeditions to Quebec, 1690 and 1711: The Evolution of British Trans-Atlantic Amphibious Power', in *Guerres Maritimes, 1688-1713*, (1996), p. 212; Rodger, N. A. M., *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815*, (London, 2004), p. 276.

¹⁶⁶ Boscawen, *The Capture of Louisbourg, 1758*, (awaiting publication), chapter 11.

destined for Quebec. Brigadier-General George Townshend recognised that operations in the St Lawrence during winter would be ‘madness’, where, if the fleet was not trapped by ice in the river, it would be exposed to the mercy of the tempestuous Atlantic.¹⁶⁷ Ice was not something to be sneered at, for in April 1759, it held ships near Newfoundland for twenty-two days and Wolfe was hampered by ice at Cape Breton during May.¹⁶⁸ However, in contrast to 1711, better charts of the St Lawrence were obtainable prior to sailing in 1759, pilots and small buoy-ships were available, supplies were more than adequate and the establishment of Halifax allowed Major-General James Wolfe and Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Saunders to take full advantage of the short campaigning season.¹⁶⁹

Saunders had the advantage of time and more accurate methods of navigation, and was able to send a small group into the St Lawrence to provide soundings.¹⁷⁰ He sent Vice-Admiral Durell into the river at the earliest opportunity the ice allowed. Durell was extremely cautious given that the navigation was still unknown.¹⁷¹ Captured French charts proved to be poor and (the future Captain) James Cook began to correct them in 1758, when he methodically charted the River and Gulf of St Lawrence, after first learning how to use the plane table. He compiled charts over many months and his efforts were of immense value to the navy.¹⁷² Saunders proceeded upriver after Durell had allowed Cook to buoy its difficult parts. The soundings were taken only from the Isle aux Coudres – fifty-five miles from Quebec. This was much further than where the fleet met disaster in 1711, where the river was

¹⁶⁷ McLynn, Frank, *1759: The Year Britain Became Master of the World*, (London, 2008), p. 310.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 136, 146; Gwyn, ‘The Royal Navy in North America’, p. 140

¹⁶⁹ Harding, ‘The Expeditions to Quebec, 1690 and 1711’, p. 212.

¹⁷⁰ Pocock, Tom, *Battle for Empire: The Very First World War, 1756-63*, (London, 1998), pp. 153-154.

¹⁷¹ Graham, Gerald S., *Empire of the North Atlantic: The Maritime Struggle for North America*, (second edition, Toronto and London, 1958), p. 177.

¹⁷² Brumwell, Stephen, *Paths of Glory: The Life and Death of General James Wolfe*, (London, 2006), pp. 197-198.

wide and at a point where it was not expected to cause difficulty. Saunders' squadron was able to appear before Quebec only once Cook had surveyed the 'traverse' on the St Lawrence shortly before the city. The French were amazed as 'the enemy passed sixty ships of war where we hardly dared risk a vessel of a hundred tons.'¹⁷³ These narrows posed a great danger to larger vessels and Walker's pilots would have been oblivious to this peril, which might have seen the destruction of his naval vessels.¹⁷⁴ If Walker had made similar cartographical preparations to Saunders, he would have had to ignore the immediacy of his orders and wait until 1712 before proceeding to Quebec.

Wolfe had famously defeated the French after brilliantly, and covertly, deploying his army on the Plains of Abraham after a night landing upriver of Quebec's defences. A previous landing to the east of the city went horrendously wrong. Quebec's fortifications, whilst vastly improved since Walker's day, were still fairly poor and it was its strong geographical position that proved to be its most effective defence. Therefore, Wolfe was able to draw out the Marquis de Montcalm from behind Quebec's walls and inflicted a decisive defeat upon the French after a battle lasting only fifteen minutes. Yet after the fighting, the French could still frustrate British expansionist ambitions by besieging the victors at Quebec. However, with the advancing winter, the experience of Brigadier-General James Murray (replacing Wolfe after his death), may indicate what Hill could have expected fifty years earlier. Murray's army was largely decimated during the winter of 1759-1760

¹⁷³ Pocock, Tom, *Battle for Empire*, p. 157.

¹⁷⁴ Reilly, Robin, *Wolfe of Quebec*, (London, 2001), p. 236; Brumwell, *Paths of Glory*, p. 198; Pocock, *Battle for Empire*, pp. 153-154; Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic*, pp. 178-179; Herman, Arthur, *To Rule the Waves: How the British Navy Shaped the Modern World*, (London, 2005), p. 298.

when almost fifty per cent of his men were sick or dead.¹⁷⁵ He was completely isolated, without any prospect of resupply until May at the earliest, as Saunders evacuated the St Lawrence in November. The troops succumbed owing to inadequate clothing, which was particularly needed for the snowy treks into the surrounding wilderness to maintain the supply of firewood, but also as a result of Wolfe's scorched-earth tactics against the local population in the previous summer.¹⁷⁶ Murray nevertheless held out at Quebec after losing the battle of Sainte-Foy as the consequent French siege was broken only by the arrival of the Royal Navy in May 1760. When news arrived in London, *The Monitor* looked back at the history of Britain's attempt to conquer New France, including that of 1711.¹⁷⁷

Only one more attempt was ever made to take Quebec and it was not a vengeful French force that challenged the British, but an American one whose differences had finally blown into full-scale rebellion. Shortly after the outbreak of the War of American Independence (1775-1783), Colonel Benedict Arnold marched on Quebec in September 1775 from Maine. Arnold's bateaux were leaky and poorly constructed, and by October the temperature at night had dropped below freezing, rains flooded their passage and eventually snow slowed their progress. Combined with hunger resulting from a dearth of provisions and barren surroundings, the inclement weather inflicted disease, considerably affecting the effectiveness of those

¹⁷⁵ Charters, Erica M., 'Disease, Wilderness Warfare, and Imperial Relations: The Battle for Quebec, 1759-1760', *War In History*, vol. XVI; no. 1, (2009), p. 1.

¹⁷⁶ Charters, 'Disease, Wilderness Warfare, and Imperial Relations', pp. 11-12; Anderson, Fred, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*, (London, 2000), p. 368.

¹⁷⁷ 'The ministry in 1711, tired with a long and bloody war in Flanders, and without any prospect of brining about an honourable peace, turned their thoughts to the expedient of galling the enemy, and of making him more tractable by taking Quebec from him...', *The Monitor or British Freeholder*, 27 October 1759, issue 223.

that survived.¹⁷⁸ Arnold linked up with General Richard Montgomery, who, in an operation comparable to that which Nicholson had undertaken, took Montreal after it was evacuated by the British to reinforce Quebec.¹⁷⁹ It was December and the frozen ground meant that trenches could not be opened for a siege against Quebec. A brave assault on the lower town was launched on New Years Eve with drastic results. The superior British defenders inflicted forty per cent casualties on the Americans.¹⁸⁰ Captain-General Guy Carleton, the British governor, had learnt the lesson demonstrated by Montcalm not to leave the protection of the city walls.¹⁸¹ The remainder of the Americans attempted to maintain a blockade, but the climate and an outbreak of smallpox had taken its toll. This blockade was ineffective against a well-provisioned Quebec and, with the arrival of British reinforcements sailing up the St Lawrence, the Americans were beaten back never to return.¹⁸²

IV: Conclusion

The 1711 expedition served to preserve the British conquest of Acadia and otherwise did not affect the outcome of the peace treaty. It did, however, have some negative effects in the Americas. The expedition had clearly strained relations with the colonists, which furthered American suspicions of the motherland. The unimpressed chiefs of the Five Nations concluded a neutrality agreement with the French, who consequently harassed the colonial frontier, further improved their defences and dispatched privateers to harass the West Indies. Ironically Walker could have

¹⁷⁸ Hibbert, Christopher, *Redcoats and Rebels: The War for America, 1770-1781*, (London, 2001), p. 90; Manning, *Quebec*, pp. 155-157.

¹⁷⁹ Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels*, p. 89; Manning, *Quebec*, pp. 148-149, 163.

¹⁸⁰ Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels*, pp. 92-93; Manning, *Quebec*, pp. 165-170.

¹⁸¹ Manning, *Quebec*, p. 163; Sturgis, James, 'Carleton, Guy, first Baron Dorchester (1724-1808)', *ODNB*.

¹⁸² Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels*, p. 93; Manning, *Quebec*, pp. 171-175.

prevented the latter event, but was denied the opportunity because he was not given intelligence of the French squadron by the colonial authorities. Nevertheless, his presence limited the damage caused by Cassard who was unwilling to face him.

The paranoia of the new regime concerning closet Jacobitism created a period of hysteria in which many capable officers were wronged. Hill managed to evade such speculation, but lost some of his offices. Oxford suffered temporarily, whilst Bolingbroke fled to support the Pretender. In Walker's case, there is no evidence to suggest that he was overtly political and accusations of him being an ardent Tory seem to have been made simply to explain the reason why he was appointed to command on the expedition.¹⁸³ He was a senior naval captain and his promotion to rear-admiral was not unusual for such an officer and Admiralty records do not condemn Walker's service.¹⁸⁴ Hill did not receive a knighthood even though his advancement was critical for securing royal support for the expedition, yet one was awarded to Walker as was the case with most flag-officers. This indicates that he was made a scapegoat when Bolingbroke could not be punished, but Walker was evidently vindicated by the Whig administration and had also received favour from their pre-1710 ministry.

Such events illustrate, along with St John's motives, that the Quebec expedition was dispatched for political as well as strategic reasons. The advent of peace would deny the colonials another opportunity to achieve their ambitions until

¹⁸³ J. K. Laughton suggested that Walker's prospective arrest was nothing to do with his failure to take Quebec, but 'on suspicion of Jacobitism' rather than 'misconduct in the Canada expedition' as Rear-Admiral Hardy was similarly affected, in 'Walker, Hovenden', *Dictionary of National Biography*, LIX, p. 66; Callendar in, *The Life of Admiral Sir John Leake*, II, p. 367 n. 2, stated there is no evidence of Walker being a Jacobite.

¹⁸⁴ TNA, ADM 6/424, Post-captains seniority record. Under 'remarks and accidents' the following is recorded: 'Sailed from St Helens the 30 of April 1711, was then rear admiral of the white bound to Canada, returned without success, afterwards commanded in the West Indies, returned to England the 26 of May 1713' which is not suggestive of poor treatment by the Admiralty. It also does not state that he was dismissed from command or had his half-pay stopped, leaving an unblemished record.

the War of the Austrian Succession thirty years later. Their dreams were eventually fulfilled when the French North American empire was finally conquered another war later in 1760, however, it was no easy victory. Growing divisions between colony and motherland eventually became permanent. Ironically, this would see a role reversal with Britain defending Quebec from its former subjects and allies in 1775-1776.¹⁸⁵ All three eighteenth-century sieges of Quebec, by the British, French and the American rebels, show how difficult a task Walker, Hill and Nicholson had faced. It can be no coincidence, however, that during the 1740s, which saw a resurgent interest in Canada, Bolingbroke (who repented his Jacobitism and returned to Britain in 1725 after being pardoned)¹⁸⁶ was well acquainted with Pitt the Elder, who later oversaw the strategy which saw the eventual conquest of New France.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ The 1711 expedition remained in the American consciousness as in 1774, a merchant wrote letters to newspapers about the good character of the American people, particularly those of Massachusetts, and how they had helped Walker, *The Craftsman or Say's Weekly Journal*, 26 March 1774, issue 816. The expedition was also briefly mentioned in an American novel: Hawthorne, Nathaniel, *Grandfather's Chair* (1840) p.101, which told of the 'warlike bustle in the streets of Boston. The drum and fife, the rattle of arms, and the shouts of boys...but after the misfortune...many pious people began to think it a sin even to wish for the conquest of Canada'.

¹⁸⁶ St John died in 1751 and had not held office since the days of Queen Anne. Dickinson, 'St John, Henry', *ODNB*.

¹⁸⁷ See 'The Diary of the Earl of Marchmont' in Rose, George Henry, (ed.), *A Selection from the Papers of the Earls of Marchmont*, (London, 1831), I, *passim*; Buffinton, 'The Canada Expedition of 1746', p. 557.

CONCLUSION

The 1711 Quebec expedition was an unprecedented British operation that saw the largest military force ever deployed to North America fail, because the unknown navigation of the St Lawrence River invited disaster. Constraints imposed on the expedition commanders by Henry St John had also ensured that success was unlikely to have been forthcoming. The force St John assembled was, however, proficient. Constant delays caused by poor weather and late organisation endangered the entire enterprise, particularly with the late dispatch of Lieutenant-General Francis Nicholson. Worse, St John's obsessive endeavours to keep the preparations for the expedition secret were completely unnecessary, resulting in his decision to allocate the regiments with only three months' provisions, thus necessitating a massive revictualling operation at Boston. Nicholson's belated arrival in America added to the strain in New England. These factors combined to impede the operation which essentially had to take place in a seasonable time of year if it was to succeed. Governor Joseph Dudley, oblivious to the existence of an expedition, wrote to London on 22 May 1711 'if we have not the advice in ten days more, it will be almost impossible to be seasonably ready for so distant a descent [at Quebec] and so difficult a river'.¹ If the fleet had sailed fully provisioned earlier in the year, only a short pause would have been required at Boston to take on the provincial troops and a smaller quantity of supplies to replenish what had been consumed, but not on such a scale that pressurised the local population, souring relations between colonial civilian and British regular. Also, if St John had not assumed that the New Englanders possessed

¹ The National Archives (hereafter cited as TNA), CO 5/898, Dudley to [Dartmouth?], 22 May 1711.

adequate knowledge of the problematical St Lawrence, he could have recruited sufficient expertise from the Admiralty to give guidance on this crucial matter.

Had the fleet managed to feel its way through the 'traverse' to Quebec safely, it was then reliant on the *Feversham* successfully escorting further supply ships to them before the harsh winter made the St Lawrence impassable. In such an era, starvation and disease would have claimed many troops if they had not already suffered at the hands of the enemy. Had the prospective siege of Quebec been a success, then inevitably the garrison would have starved or had to turn back prematurely with the onslaught of the icy conditions which accompany the Canadian winter. Gerald S. Graham commented that there was substance to Rear-Admiral Walker's worry about the stock of provisions and compared it to Brigadier-General Murray's predicament in the winter of 1759-1760.²

The expedition did not have any detrimental effect on the Treaty of Utrecht. It confirmed Annapolis Royal as a British possession by potentially preventing the French from retaking it. Consequently, Nova Scotia was used as a platform, with the establishment of Halifax, for future conquests in North America. However, the expedition also initialised a substantial building programme to improve the fortifications at Quebec and the peace treaty was not specific about the new boundaries, allowing the French to construct the great fortress of Louisbourg. It was established on Cape Breton Island, not only to guard the approach to Quebec, but also to be used as a major port for trade with France and the West Indies, allowing

² 'Murray's isolated garrison in Quebec nearly succumbed to cold and starvation as their supplies dwindled away. Even supposing the French capital had succumbed to the invaders, would Walker have been any better off than Napoleon in Moscow?' Graham, Gerald S. (ed.), 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec, 1711', *Navy Records Society*, vol. XCIV, (1953), p. xv.

merchant vessels to make two round trips a year by avoiding the dangers of a frozen St Lawrence.³

The Quebec expedition also served to develop Britain as a major military and naval power by demonstrating a power projection which the French simply could not compete with. It thus initiated the resurgence of a true blue-water strategy. The minor deviation from this policy came after the Glorious Revolution, under influence from a Dutch King usually allied with the Whigs. It was William III's influence that saw English involvement in the Nine Years War and saw the making of the Grand Alliance in preparation for a large land commitment in the Spanish Succession War. The British experience of having a monarch with Dutch interests allowed the politicians to later dictate policy to German Kings concerned with Hanoverian survival, who were naturally more concerned with a continental approach to warfare.⁴ Britain's fiscal expansion during the war transformed it into an economic superpower, allowing it to later provide money for continental warfare and the protection of Hanover, rather than having to send its own sizeable land army. The British Army would instead be used to cooperate with the Royal Navy, to seize profitable and strategically important colonies from the European powers focused upon continental campaigning.

Indeed blue-water strategy could not be put into effect without such continental diversions. In the American War of Independence, Britain had lost in part due to there being no European conflict to divert the attentions of France, and as this

³ Although G. M. Trevelyan suggests the French retention of Cape Breton was because of Walker's failure, *England Under Queen Anne*, (London, 1948), III, p. 185.

⁴ George I and George II favoured a continental policy, whilst Parliament generally preferred a maritime approach. This changed with the accession of George III who was more interested in Great Britain than Hanover and so favoured a blue-water strategy, Baugh, Daniel, A., 'Great Britain's 'Blue Water Policy'', *International History Review*, vol. 10, (1998), pp. 34, 49. Lambert, Andrew, *War at Sea in the Age of Sail*, (London, 2002) p. 106.

was also a time when the French Navy was enjoying a resurgence in funding, it was able to capitalise upon this. Post-1713 European wars gave Britain a series of continental alliances to exploit and concentrate instead on acquiring colonies for the economic and mercantile well-being of the British state.⁵ In this respect the War of the Spanish Succession was a missed opportunity.

In less than thirty years, England had progressed from a relatively peripheral naval power under Charles II to a position where it dominated the maritime sphere. By asserting their strength in naval affairs, the British were able to supersede both the French and Dutch at sea, as they were increasingly concerned with the security of their land frontiers. It achieved this by adopting an ultimately successful Mediterranean maritime strategy. In doing so, Britain indirectly played off its two primary naval rivals, who were struggling with the financial implications of maintaining navies whilst simultaneously conducting a major land war.

An entrenched confidence in British naval power had taken root during the war. After the Treaty of Utrecht the balance of power had altered, and that was due to an emergent Britain, no longer at ease with remaining on the periphery of European politics. Britain's naval policy was able to provide for future security through maritime superiority. The British fleet was to be larger than any of its rivals. British peace negotiators were able to identify a distinct naval and colonial approach to future policy that would be ultimately beneficial to the country. By dominating the

⁵ Kennedy, Paul, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, (London, 2001), p. 116. However, Rodger, N.A.M., 'The Continental Commitment in the Eighteenth Century', in Freedman, Lawrence; Hates, Paul; and O'Neill, Robert, (eds), *War, Strategy and International Politics*, (Oxford, 1992), pp. 42, 53-55 questions this theory and asserts that a balanced commitment could not be avoided. Baugh stated that blue-water policy enabled success without financial ruin and Britain was defensive in Europe and aggressive overseas later in the century, when a successful outcome rather than an outright win was required. The exception here was Pitt towards the end of the Seven Years' War, Baugh, 'Great Britain's 'Blue Water Policy'', pp. 41, 58-59. Alternatively, Simms believes that a continental approach was dominant in British foreign policy, Simms, Brendan, *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire*, (London, 2008).

Mediterranean and continuing that policy into the peace by maintaining naval bases there and neutralising the Spanish threat at Cape Passaro in 1718, Britain ensured that it would remain seated at the top-table of European nations.⁶ It achieved this through its wartime Mediterranean strategy espoused by the Earl of Nottingham, which enabled it not only to deny control of that sea to the enemy, but also to influence its allies and other smaller states. Britain could then influence continental affairs without the need to deploy an expensive army.

Britain in 1711 had asserted itself as the leader of a European alliance. The retention of control over the Mediterranean allowed Britain to confidently look at expanding its military capabilities outside European waters and regard Quebec as a viable target. The Quebec expedition served partly as an experimental example of this blue-water war strategy. The British then proceeded unwittingly down an imperial route that would later be defined by Pitt the Elder during the Seven Years War.⁷ As the Tories, and much of the influential public, were becoming increasingly concerned by the prolongation of the war, many began to question the wisdom of the continental war strategy. Jonathan Swift's propaganda to a war-weary public was firmly planted in the Tory maritime school of thought. In communicating his arguments, Swift did not try to conceal the Quebec failure, rather he referred positively to the expedition as exactly the sort of operation that should have been conducted throughout the war.⁸

⁶ Black, Jeremy, *Warfare in the Eighteenth Century*, (London, 2002), p. 146; Lambert, *War at Sea in the Age of Sail*, p. 106.

⁷ Morgan, William Thomas, 'The South Sea Company and the Canadian Expedition in the Reign of Queen Anne', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. VIII, no. 2, (May 1928), p. 166; Hattendorf, John B., *England in the War of the Spanish Succession: A Study of the English View and Conduct of Grand Strategy, 1702-1712*, (New York; London, 1987), p. 191 noted that Britain was more concerned with trade protection than expanding territory, but this was a consequence, nevertheless.

⁸ Swift, Jonathan, *The Conduct of the Allies...*, (second edition, London, 1711), pp. 32-33.

The expedition of 1711 had not been the culmination of any ongoing colonial strategy, but had demonstrated the value of power projection in a way never before seen. Its scale was unprecedented and, with its dispatch, the colonies acquired a new importance. London was finally listening to the colonial governors and responded accordingly. It was ironic that the strain placed upon them to provide supplies for the fleet, combined with the apportioning of blame after news of the disaster had spread, resulted in the deterioration of Britain's relations with its colonies which would set an ominous precedent for events sixty-five years later, when the colonists' dreams of security from the French had finally been realised.

Colonial governments needed the help of the mother country with respect to Britain's resources, financial capacity, and the professionalism of its regular forces. This had been demonstrated with Sir William Phips' attempt in 1690 which raised an undisciplined, ill-equipped militia at huge expense which almost bankrupted Massachusetts. The 1690 expedition has been celebrated for having arrived at Quebec in October, but this only proves that Phips lacked judgment.⁹ To campaign so late in the season in such harsh conditions could only result in failure. Both his fleet and its component vessels were much smaller (and more suited to those waters) than Walker's and Phips suffered too in the St Lawrence on his return.¹⁰

⁹ Samuel Vetch brought this to Walker's attention after the consultation of the sea officers. Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 366, Vetch's journal, also in Nova Scotia Historical Society, *Report and Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society for the Year 1884*, (Halifax, 1885), IV, p. 109. 'The most fortunate thing that happened to Phips (and the fate of the Walker expedition of 1711 showed that it was simply luck) was that the fleet, without experienced pilots, navigated the treacherous St Lawrence without mishap', Steele, Ian K., *Guerillas and Grenadiers: The Struggle for Canada, 1689-1760*, (Toronto, 1969), p. 28.

¹⁰ Harding, Richard, 'The Expeditions to Quebec, 1690 and 1711: The Evolution of British Trans-Atlantic Amphibious Power', in *Guerres Maritimes, 1688-1713*, (1996), p. 203. Even the naval vessels were limited in their abilities, 'the largest of which would have been too small to sail in any European line of battle', Steele, Ian K., *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*, (New York; Oxford, 1994), p. 143; the flagship *Six Friends* was a frigate of forty-four-guns, Watkins, Walter Kendall, *Soldiers in the Expedition to Canada in 1690 and Grantees of the Canada Townships* (Society of Colonial Wars in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts), (Boston, 1898), p. 29.

The constant clamouring for assistance by the colonies eventually received the attention of London. Samuel Vetch, in particular, can be credited with formulating the plan for the intended expedition of 1709 and creating the conditions which would inspire St John. Reverend Buckingham's diary records the impressive operational effectiveness of Nicholson's force in the wilderness – as ever the colonials had met the tough challenge of organising themselves in conjunction with a British force. Once again they were left disappointed. Failure in 1711 tainted British relations with the colonies and helped create the conditions for rebellion once the French threat had been extinguished.

Much of the historiography concerning the 1711 expedition is extremely critical of the expedition's commanders. Instead, St John should receive the most censure. His project was, however, a good concept to reassert a blue-water strategy at a time when the ministry was reconsidering its war aims because of Marlborough's endless, and expensive, campaigning. C. T. Atkinson made grand assumptions about war strategy when he optimistically stated: 'had Marlborough had a free hand in 1711 he might have won not only Canada, but even Martinique and Guadeloupe, at the gates of an ill-fortified Paris'.¹¹ In another article, Atkinson grandiosely claimed that the five regiments withdrawn from Flanders, uselessly employed in Canada, was the reason why Marlborough did not offer battle with Marshal Villars in 1711 after crossing the lines of *Ne Plus Ultra*. Such a battle would have 'opened the road to Paris, when Louis XIV would have been powerless to hold out for the retention of Quebec'.¹² This concept not only buys the Whiggish propaganda of an invincible

¹¹ Atkinson, C. T., 'Queen Anne's War in the West Indies Part II: The Windward Sphere', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, vol. XXIV, (1946), p. 197.

¹² Atkinson, C. T., 'The Peninsular "Second Front" in the Spanish Succession War', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, vol. XXII, (1943/1944), p. 223.

Marlborough (who, after Malplaquet in 1709, may have been wisely displaying more caution), but that a mere five under-strength battalions would have been enough reinforcement to convince him to fight a resurgent French army entrenched in a strong position. Replacements for the regiments had been secured in any case.¹³ Even so, the Duke had actually offered battle previously when he himself was strongly entrenched, which Villars naturally refused, and it was always Marlborough's intention to invest Bouchain anyway.¹⁴ After all, it had taken a decade before Marlborough was in a position to take that fortress, so the myth that Paris was about to fall, which had also been thought after previous campaigns, should be extinguished.

As if to compare Whig success against Tory failure, in Bishop Burnet's popular 1734 *History of His Own Time*, the description of the Quebec expedition was dissected by a specially inserted article detailing the plan of Marlborough's successful siege at Bouchain.¹⁵ This unfortunate coincidence was further compounded by the symbolic fact that the operations were conducted almost simultaneously. The trenches at Bouchain were opened on 23 August, although the army operated under the New Style calendar whilst on mainland Europe making 3 September the Gregorian date of the disaster on the St Lawrence.¹⁶

St John was not only motivated by an attempt to reclaim a strategy advantageous to Britain, but also by personal ambition. His timing was completely wrong. The series of royal deaths which both propelled the Archduke Charles onto the Emperor's throne of the Holy Roman Empire, and threatened to unite both France

¹³ Murray, George, (ed.), *The Letters and Dispatches of John Churchill, First Duke of Marlborough, from 1702 to 1712*, (London, 1845), V, p. 388, Marlborough to St John, 22 June 1711.

¹⁴ Chandler, John, *Marlborough as Military Commander*, (London, 2000), p. 291.

¹⁵ Burnet, Gilbert, *Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time*, (London, 1734), VI, supplement between pp. 1144-1145.

¹⁶ Chandler, *Marlborough as Military Commander*, p. 296; Falkner, James, *Marlborough's Sieges*, (Stroud, 2007), p. 239.

and Spain under the Duke of Anjou, significantly altered the balance of power. This should have induced St John to cancel all preparations associated with the expedition. Further, upon learning of the secret peace negotiations with France he should not have risked dispatching Walker. His desire for personal glory proved too tempting for him to reconsider, particularly after Guiscard's attack on Harley. Therefore, his organisation of the expedition should have been more competent. R. E. Scouller disparaged his abilities when he stated that 'St John...inspired – for it could hardly be dignified with the word organised – Jack Hill's Canadian filibuster'.¹⁷ Of course, St John was hampered by securing proper authorisation, but the late dispatch of Nicholson, and his arrival at Boston rather than New York, was a significant contribution to failure.

Burnet was also deeply critical of St John's organisation. He singled out the issue of supply: 'a commissioner of the victualling...told me, he could not guess what made them be sent out so ill furnished, for they had stores, lying on their hands, for a full supply'. Burnet also accused the Tory ministry of hypocrisy when, as the expedition was being organised in secret, they were simultaneously investigating military operations authorised by the Whigs that had not been properly supplied or sanctioned by Parliament.¹⁸ He was referring to the Almansa investigation for which St John was partly responsible as he was secretary at war at the time in 1707.¹⁹ Burnet's criticism of a lack of investigation into the Quebec expedition before the Hanoverian succession justified St John's fear that 'if it fails [it] will perhaps be particularly prejudicial to me, who in the carrying it on hitherto have not been backed

¹⁷ Scouller, R. E., *The Armies of Queen Anne*, (Oxford, 1966), p. 3.

¹⁸ Burnet, *Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time*, VI, pp. 1145-1146.

¹⁹ *The Journals of the House of Lords*, (London, 1803), XIX, 1709-1714, p. 209, 31 January 1711, shows that in 1707 there were only 13,759 soldiers in British pay in Spain when there should have been 29,395.

by those forms and orders, which are necessary safeguards in a government'.²⁰

Nevertheless, the warped concept of obfuscation by providing a mere three months' victuals for General Hill's army was a major cause for failure.

Winston S. Churchill was wrong to assert that St John 'rightly attached so much consequence to secrecy'.²¹ The limited victuals issued to the expedition ensured that the fleet's visit to Boston was unavoidable, but as P. K. Watson pointed out, St John 'omitted to ask the victuallers if the New England colonies could supply the necessary provisions...if he had...they would have been able to assure him that his plan would not work'.²² Thomas Lediard noted an anonymous author blamed the disaster on St John for acquiring inadequate supplies: 'this indeed preserved the secrecy, but it destroyed the design'.²³ He also criticised him for presuming a passage to Quebec would be easy as he did not consult the Admiralty. Admiralty Secretary Josiah Burchett's criticism of St John's lack of consultation with his department was scathing. Walker's instructions were, he stated:

prepared without so much as consulting the then Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, either as to the fitness of the ships appointed for the expedition, or the nature of the navigation; but, on the contrary, the design on which they were bound was rather industriously hid from them...by which a certain person [St John] seemed to value himself very much that a design of this nature was kept a secret from the Admiralty; who, had they been consulted, would not, I am apt to think, have advised the sending ships of eighty- and seventy-guns to Quebec, since the navigation up the River of St Lawrence was generally esteemed to be very

²⁰ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Hunter, 6 February 1711.

²¹ Churchill, Winston S., *Marlborough: His Life and Times*, (London, 1938), IV, p. 393.

²² Watson, P. K., 'The Commission for Victualling the Navy, the Commission for Sick and Wounded Seamen and Prisoners of War and the Commission for Transport 1702-1714' (Royal Holloway, University of London PhD thesis, 1965), p. 55.

²³ Lediard, Thomas (translator), *The History of England, by M. Rapin de Thoyras*, (London, 1736), III, p. 389, n. 2 (Lediard's note).

dangerous. Nor were their lordships permitted to know anything of this matter, at least not in form, until advice was received that the French were equipping a considerable squadron at Brest, which some of the ministry were apprehensive might be designed to intercept Sir Hovenden Walker; but it was too late to take any proper measures for preventing it, if the enemy had really had any such intentions.²⁴

St John's obsession with this secrecy was extremely detrimental. His methods meant that expert opinion could not be consulted and the expedition's supplies were limited, which unnecessarily placed an unbearable burden upon Boston. Combined with Walker's delayed departure, this ensured the expedition had little time remaining in the campaigning season to attempt an attack on Quebec.

Regarding Burchett's opinion on taking larger ships up the St Lawrence, Walker did not take the eighty-gunners as he was informed that the French had lost many sizeable ships on the river.²⁵ Thomas More Molyneux wrote that Walker 'rightly judged' that the larger vessels should not proceed given the unknown navigation.²⁶ Trevelyan is of the opposite opinion, noting that Rear-Admiral Saunders had managed in 1759 with vessels of both eighty- and ninety-guns.²⁷ However, this was after the river was meticulously charted; nevertheless, Admiral Boscawen had previously refused to sail into the St Lawrence, in which the French only employed small vessels.²⁸ Walker was wise to abide by such advice when he was entering the unknown.

²⁴ Burchett, Josiah, *A Complete History of the Most Remarkable Transactions at Sea*, (London, 1720), p. 778.

²⁵ TNA, SP 42/68, Walker to St John, 14 August 1711.

²⁶ Molyneux, Thomas More, *Conjunct Expeditions: or Expeditions that have been Carried on Jointly by the Fleet and Army, with a Commentary on Littoral War*, (London, 1759), p. 163.

²⁷ Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*, III, p. 144n.

²⁸ Manning, Stephen, *Quebec: The Story of Three Sieges*, (London; New York, 2009), pp. 24-25.

Such opinions which dismiss the difficulty of eighteenth-century voyages are prone to error, as stated in S. B. A. Willis' excellent article which aimed to challenge inaccurate assumptions about how a fleet's cohesion is managed.²⁹ There was no ship standardisation in Walker's fleet which offered a huge challenge in keeping it together, which is why divisions led by subordinate commanders were created.³⁰ 'Fleet cohesion in sailing ships...[was] hard to maintain, and always impossible to guarantee'. Walker was able to maintain cohesion within the unknown navigation of the St Lawrence River at night and in fog, which caused only a small proportion of his fleet to founder. Therefore, a leaf should be taken from Willis' article when he stated that 'historians could do worse than take a lesson in humility from the contemporaries they study'.³¹

G. M. Waller agreed that controlling a fleet was extremely difficult, but was contradictory in his perceptions of Walker: 'to shepherd a large and motley assemblage of ships of the line, auxiliaries, transports, and supply vessels across the North Atlantic called for a high order of leadership and seamanship, but these were qualities which Walker did not possess'.³² Walker's record of managing fleets across the Atlantic speaks for itself. However, Waller later wrote that 'Walker made an unusually fast crossing [to Boston], just over seven weeks', implying that his crossing

²⁹ Although the article primarily analyses a fleet in battle, it provides a great example of the difficulties Walker would have found in keeping his fleet together, Willis, S. B. A., 'Fleet Performance and Capability in the Eighteenth-Century Royal Navy', *War in History*, vol. XI, no. 4, (2004).

³⁰ 'A fleet was not a single and solid physical entity but a loose collection of ships which ebbed and flowed in shape, formation and structure, and required constant independent input of action and decision from all ships to retain any semblance of cohesion. This free-flowing and ever-changing formation demanded that each ship be at the peak of her sailing capability, and that the captain and the ship's company exercise considerable skill and initiative in their handling of her', *ibid.*, p. 390.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 392. Harding also identifies the challenges faced by fleets in Harding, Richard, 'Sailors and Gentlemen of Parade: Some Professional and Technical Problems Concerning the Conduct of Combined Operations in the Eighteenth Century', *The Historical Journal*, vol. XXXII, no. 1, (March, 1989), pp. 49-50.

³² Waller, G. M., *Samuel Vetch, Colonial Enterpriser*, (Chapel Hill (North Carolina), 1960), p. 210.

was well conducted after all.³³ Even so, it was not the dangerous North Atlantic that challenged Walker's seamanship, it was the confines of the St Lawrence that bested him – and even then when he had retired for the night. Throughout his description of the events, Waller accused Walker, his pilots and captains, and even Colonel King, of fearing sailing on the St Lawrence.³⁴ When Waller echoed Vetch's belief that Walker should have sailed on 14 August, rather than sheltering at Gaspé, he implied that 'fear' of running into the shoals around Anticosti Island paralysed the fleet from pushing on.³⁵ Walker was simply, and sensibly, following his pilot's advice at the time.³⁶ To proceed in the hasty manner suggested by Vetch would have amounted to recklessness. If excessive caution resulted in the losses of 23 August, then what would have been the consequences of a more confident approach? Waller's statement that Walker's 'careless assurance [when he retired before disaster struck] contrasted strangely with his frequently expressed fears' again proves that his character has been unjustly smeared.³⁷ Walker showed not fear, but concern for completing a daunting task, and he more frequently displayed considerable confidence.

William Thomas Morgan erroneously stated that Walker opened his orders at sea and Stephen Martin-Leake even suggested that Walker would have refused to go had he been aware of his destination.³⁸ Yet Walker was quite aware of the facts – his instructions did not include caveats on their opening like others involved in the expedition, Commissary Netmaker for example. Even Colonel Kane knew the

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, chapter 12 *passim*.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

³⁶ Walker, Hovenden, 'A Journal: Or Full Account of the Late Expedition to Canada', p. 134, 14 August 1711, in Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec' (hereafter cited as Walker, 'Journal').

³⁷ Waller, *Samuel Vetch*, p. 224.

³⁸ Morgan, William Thomas, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711', *Bulletin of the Departments of History and Political and Economic Science in Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario, Canada*, no. 56, (May 1928), p. 21; Callender, G. A. R., (ed.); Martin-Leake, Stephen 'The Life of Admiral Sir John Leake', II, *Navy Records Society*, vol. LIII, (1919) p. 366.

expedition's purpose when organising the regiments in Flanders.³⁹ Walker did not display any trepidation when he learnt that he would operate in the feared Caribbean in 1702, 1706 and 1712. Richard Harding has stated that 'to conclude that it was only Walker's timidity that lay between the expedition and the capture of Quebec does little justice to the situation at the time'.⁴⁰ Morgan additionally advertised the instances when Walker delayed sailing because of contrary winds or lack of pilots, which displays an ignorance of sailing procedures.⁴¹ The ubiquitous Whig discourse, which propelled Marlborough into the role of a hero, has contributed to such opinions of Walker. Again, Willis noted that commanders airing such concerns have been mistaken for being 'overcautious and pessimistic'.⁴²

Graham, having been one of the few historians to have examined the expedition in any great detail, arrived at a fairly balanced appraisal of Walker given the political circumstances of the time: 'In view of the savage political vendettas which affected the careers of soldiers and sailors as well as statesmen, it is not easy to sort the wheat from the chaff of controversy, and to pass final judgement on the quality and conduct of a minor figure who lived in the age of Swift.'⁴³ Incidentally, Swift attributed the disaster solely to the stormy weather on the St Lawrence.⁴⁴

Graham concluded, however, that 'nothing we know about Walker's career would

³⁹ TNA, SP 44/213, St John to Kane, 17 March 1711.

⁴⁰ Harding, 'The Expeditions to Quebec, 1690 and 1711', p. 209.

⁴¹ Morgan, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711', p. 15 uses the example in 1708 when the Pretender threatened to land in Britain, but this ignores the fact that other squadrons also could not sail because of this. Pilots were indispensable, Walker could not risk his fleet grounding in any situation and many other operations were delayed owing to a lack of suitable pilots. Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 22 notes the same in the 1711 expedition, despite also acknowledging the appalling weather which prevented him from departing. Preparations were still being made at this time, too. When Marlborough sailed in the amphibious operation to Cork and Kinsale in 1690, his fleet was forced to wait two weeks before sailing because of the weather, Barnett, Corelli, *Marlborough*, (Ware, 1999), p. 48.

⁴² Willis, 'Fleet Performance and Capability in the Eighteenth-Century Royal Navy', p. 392.

⁴³ Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 16.

⁴⁴ Swift, Jonathan, (Aitken, George A. ed.), *Journal to Stella*, (London, 1901), Letter XXXI, 6 October 1711, p. 309.

seem to justify his appointment to high command', agreeing with Churchill's remark that Walker 'had not any notable war achievements to his credit'.⁴⁵ This thesis has demonstrated that, for the type of operation that the expedition was, Walker had the best qualification – he was a successful convoy commander. Herbert L. Osgood alone described Walker's 'long and varied service' to be 'an honourable one'.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, Graham remained mildly critical of Walker's abilities, whilst acknowledging the difficulties he faced: 'lacking provisions, without pilots and without competent leadership, the expedition had turned into a gigantic gamble long before it reached the River St Lawrence, with the odds weighted heavily against success'.⁴⁷ The expedition was constrained by the actions of St John and competent leadership was displayed – the decision to return home was rational and sensible. D. E. Leach was guilty of hyperbole when he described Walker as: 'an officer of rather modest qualities, which unfortunately did not include determination, tenacity, and bulldog courage'.⁴⁸ Walker was responsible for the safety of a massive fleet, not sailing into a sea battle. In a similar vein, J. H. Owen compared Walker unfavourably to Rear-Admiral John Baker who was to lead the planned expedition in 1709.⁴⁹ Baker was an outstanding officer, but his naval experience was generally limited to operations in the Mediterranean, whereas Walker had wider experience in long-distance colonial operations.⁵⁰ If Baker had commanded in 1711, he would still have been inadequately supplied, subject to the same advice by inexperienced pilots in an unknown navigation, and been the victim of a politically incited scheme

⁴⁵ Churchill, *Marlborough*, IV, p. 393; Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 16.

⁴⁶ Osgood, Herbert L., *The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century*, (New York, 1930), I, p. 441.

⁴⁷ Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. xvi.

⁴⁸ Leach, D. E., *Arms for Empire: A Military History of the British Colonies in North America, 1607-1763*, (New York, 1973), p. 144.

⁴⁹ Owen, J. H., *War at sea under Queen Anne, 1702-1708*, (London, 1938), p. 50.

⁵⁰ Davies, J. D., 'Baker, John (1660–1716)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004).

overshadowed by excess secrecy. Leach, however, noted that historians critical of Walker have benefitted from hindsight.⁵¹ Harding was right to note that ‘judgment about Walker’s competence is based upon less than secure foundations. Some historians have been tempted to deduce cowardice and ineptitude in Walker from the fact that Phips successfully navigated the St Lawrence’.⁵²

Such an attitude to Walker is entirely understandable as the greatest fault can only be attributed to the failure of accurate navigation, but the limitations of the period, and the dangers of the St Lawrence, should not be ignored. Longitude could not be accurately calculated, nor would it for another fifty years when Harrison’s chronometers began to be taken seriously. Latitude could be broadly determined, although it too could not be calculated precisely as the sextant did not appear for another twenty years, making comparisons with 1759 unhelpful.⁵³ In fact, the fleet which carried Wolfe to victory encountered similar problems to those Walker faced, particularly in the unsavoury meteorological conditions of that part of the world and it had been determined by 1746 that operations on the St Lawrence should proceed no later than the end of July.⁵⁴ Aside from the unpredictable weather, the constant shifting of magnetic north was unknown at this time. A compass was then believed to point to true north which meant ships could travel several degrees off course. Also,

⁵¹ Hindsight allows a comparison with the ‘known weaknesses’ of Quebec with Walker’s ‘powerful force’ which allows historians to conclude that Quebec would have been captured if Walker continued. Leach thought this conclusion was ‘possibly correct’ and thought Walker should have ‘pushed on to victory – or catastrophe’ before the winter ice set in. He also stated that Walker did not persist because he feared another catastrophe, it was too late in the season and the lack of supplies – all rational reasons to make the sensible decision to return. Leach, *Arms for Empire*, p. 152.

⁵² Harding, ‘The Expeditions to Quebec, 1690 and 1711’, p. 198.

⁵³ Taylor, E. G. R., *The Haven-finding Art: A History of Navigation from Odysseus to Captain Cook*, (London, 1956), pp. 252-256, 261

⁵⁴ Harding, ‘The Expeditions to Quebec, 1690 and 1711’, p. 212, n. 1.

the only chart available to Walker lacked a description of the passage of the St Lawrence.⁵⁵

With or without such navigational aids, the St Lawrence proved hazardous to captains of all vessels. The iron rich shore of the river affected compass needles which could deviate by a third.⁵⁶ The Isle of Eggs and the rocky English Point, where Walker lost his transports, posed a significant danger as the mainland that forms the backdrop is low-lying, which may be concealed when combined with low-lying fog along with the islands themselves. This may have convinced Walker's crews, as there were no obvious signs of land, together with possible magnetic variation, that they were in the middle of the river. The reefs that run from the Isle of Eggs create a very shallow passageway to the rocks exposed to the north, whilst a further reef stretches over 1,000 yards northeast away from the island and the rocks. Walker would have been sailing in water of a depth of around 200 feet which would have suddenly given way to these rocky reefs.⁵⁷ Coupled with fog and the darkness, the fleet was lucky that only nine vessels were lost. Walker sailed at a time when there had been no major advances in navigation.⁵⁸ One of the greatest problems was the lack of charts. Vetch's vocal criticism of the decision not to continue upriver was a powerful weapon against Walker; however, he himself refused to guide the expedition. Geoffrey Plank suggested that, as he had never been in the area in winter, Vetch underestimated how terrible the Canadian weather could be.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. 29.

⁵⁶ Bayfield, H. W., *The St Lawrence Pilot, Comprising Sailing Directions for the Gulf and River*, I, (fourth edition, London, 1860), I, p. 14.

⁵⁷ Bayfield, *The St Lawrence Pilot*, I, pp. 223-224; Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', chart p. 37.

⁵⁸ Taylor, *The Haven-finding Art*, p. 254.

⁵⁹ Plank, Geoffrey, *An Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign Against the Peoples of Acadia*, (Philadelphia, 2001) p. 48.

The problem of navigation, fog, winds and ice created dangerous circumstances in which to sail on the St Lawrence.⁶⁰ These dangers were even echoed in the mid-nineteenth century when steam-powered vessels were prevalent and despite the navigational advances made along with the charting of the river. The *Premier* was a steam-powered troopship which foundered in thick fog at the mouth of the St Lawrence in November 1843.⁶¹ Nine other vessels were lost in the same month, including one commanded by an experienced seaman on his twenty-fifth voyage on the St Lawrence.⁶² Warships were consequently forbidden to enter the river after October and even maritime insurance could not be bought for winter sailing.⁶³ As late as May 1914, Canada's worst maritime disaster occurred in the St Lawrence, again in thick fog, when the *Empress of Ireland* ocean liner was struck by another vessel resulting in over 1,000 deaths. The problems of navigation, particularly in winter, posed continual problems for Canadian communications even into the twentieth century.⁶⁴

The dangers of the St Lawrence are excellently summarised by a pilot guide from 1860, shortly before the Admiralty initiated a survey of the river:

The navigation of the Gulf and River of St Lawrence has always been supposed to be attended with a considerable degree of difficulty and danger, and the numerous accidents which are constantly occurring to vessels there seem to show that the opinion is well founded. The want of soundings, in many parts, near the shores; the irregularity of the tides and currents; the severity of the climate, especially towards the close of the navigable season; and, above all,

⁶⁰ Harding, 'Sailors and Gentlemen of Parade', p. 49.

⁶¹ Dartnell, George R, *A Brief Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Transport 'Premier'*, (London, 1845), pp. 7-8.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁶⁴ Barnes, H. T., 'The Problems of Winter Navigation on the St. Lawrence River', reprinted pamphlet from *The Canadian Engineer*, (Montreal, 1910).

the frequent fogs, are difficulties which may well cause much anxiety in the mind of the seaman, and which call for the exercise of all his vigilance, prudence, and ability. Nevertheless, a large proportion of the losses which annually take place may justly be attributed to other than these natural and irremediable causes. Erroneous charts, a want of knowledge of the direction and strength of the tides and currents, and a false variation of the compass, are, although not the only, certainly the most frequent causes of shipwreck in the St. Lawrence.⁶⁵

This implied that little had changed since Walker's day. Advances in shipbuilding and propulsion had not stemmed the tide of disaster upon the river. Indeed, Graham observed in 1953 that 'within recent times even more astute seamen than Walker have not avoided disaster in similar circumstances. All the instruments of the twentieth century have not prevented ships from going ashore in gale and fog'.⁶⁶ Neither were the French immune in 1711, as some storeships dispatched from Quebec to supply Placentia with flour and peas foundered on the St Lawrence. Placentia only received half of the stores sent.⁶⁷

Morgan relented slightly in his criticism: 'granting that the disaster to the fleet was unavoidable (although even here it seems probable that a little more speed and somewhat more of courage by Walker might have carried him safely through the fog[!])' before continuing to say that Walker did not continue because he was 'overpowered by a fear of [the] Canadian climate'.⁶⁸ This hyperbole does not add to the debate, but only ridicules Walker's character when there were real concerns about maintaining the safety of the fleet on the St Lawrence in winter. It has been easy for

⁶⁵ Bayfield, *St Lawrence Pilot*, I, p. 13.

⁶⁶ Graham, 'The Walker Expedition to Quebec', p. xiii.

⁶⁷ Walker, 'Journal', appendix, p. 239, intercepted letter of Governor of Placentia to Pontchartrain, 23 July 1711.

⁶⁸ Morgan, 'Queen Anne's Canadian Expedition of 1711', p. 30.

historians to scoff at the 1711 disaster, yet praise has been widespread for the Stuart naval hero, Sir Cloudesley Shovell ('one of the greatest admirals of the age'),⁶⁹ who managed to steer his fleet into the Scilly Isles with four of his five warships lost, along with 2,000 men – in British waters. This occurred only four years before Walker's much larger expedition suffered in confined and uncharted foreign waters.⁷⁰

Trevelyan commented that St John 'had chosen the wrong admiral in Walker, and it therefore mattered the less that he had also chosen the wrong general in Hill'.⁷¹ Hill was usually attacked in the historiography because of the obvious symbolism of the brother to the Queen's favourite being appointed to lead a flagship Tory expedition against the interest of Marlborough's continental strategy. As he was effectively a political pawn and owed his position to patronage, it has been assumed that he was an incompetent commander, usually owing to Marlborough's disparaging comments about him, which were probably at the behest of his wife. This should not throw into question his military capabilities demonstrated by his actions at Almansa and Mons. Abel Boyer, writing his political commentary of Anne's reign during the Hanoverian period, described Hill in the year 1711 as 'brother to the new favourite, and a gentleman, who...had behaved himself with signal bravery and conduct in the battle of Almansa'.⁷² The French Baron de Carlsroon, also described Hill at the battle: '[he] behaved there with such distinguished prudence and valour, that the preservation of some of the British infantry was attributed chiefly to him'.⁷³ More

⁶⁹ Lambert, *War at Sea in the Age of Sail*, p. 90.

⁷⁰ Harris, Simon, *Sir Cloudesley Shovell, Stuart Admiral*, (Staplehurst, 2001), pp. 343-353.

⁷¹ Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*, III, p. 144.

⁷² Boyer, Abel, *Quadriennium Annæ Postremum, or the Political State of Great Britain. During the Four Last Years of the Late Queen's Reign...*, (London, 1718) I, p. 561.

⁷³ Dumont, Jean, Baron de Carlsroon, *The Military History of the Late Prince Eugene of Savoy, and of the Late John Duke of Marlborough*, (Dublin, 1737), III, pp. 356-357.

recently, I. F. Burton declared that ‘the second line [at Almansa], led by Colonel Jack Hill, saved the day’ – albeit temporarily.⁷⁴

Unfortunately, the Duchess of Marlborough’s view has been widely espoused as Trevelyan stated that if the expedition had reached Quebec then ‘even Hill could scarcely have failed to take the town’, implying that it did not even matter who was appointed to command the land forces.⁷⁵ If Quebec’s substantial defences had offered little resistance because, for example, its defenders lacked powder or were at Montreal to counter Nicholson, Hill would have faced great difficulty in holding it over winter whilst repelling irregular attacks. Alas, Trevelyan’s view was echoed by Morgan as ‘the British forces still available [after the disaster] were so manifestly superior to the French that all French North America might have fallen to a dashing commander’.⁷⁶ This does not take into consideration the massively demoralising effect which the loss of so many lives would have had. Although the British lost approximately ten per cent of their declared manpower, the proportion of the total number of effective men is unknown considering women, children, servants and administrative staff were all included. It was the challenge Hill posed to Marlborough’s authority that has perhaps mostly coloured the perception of his incompetence, but thankfully this view is slowly altering. Richard Holmes has indicated that Hill was ‘far better qualified from a purely military point of view’ to command Essex’s dragoons than Marlborough’s candidate, when the Duke’s authority was first challenged in 1710.⁷⁷

Hill’s administration at Boston was admirable and he certainly knew how to

⁷⁴ Burton, Ivor F., ‘The Secretary at War and the Administration of the Army during the War of the Spanish Succession’ (University of London PhD thesis, 1960), p. 215.

⁷⁵ Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne*, III, p. 145.

⁷⁶ Morgan, ‘Queen Anne’s Canadian Expedition of 1711’, p. 30.

⁷⁷ Holmes, Richard, *Redcoat: The British Soldier in the Age of Horse and Musket*, (London, 2001), p. 446.

organise. King wrote positively of Hill that ‘no man living but one of General Hill’s good sense and good nature could have managed [the Bostonians] with that patience and dexterity he has done’.⁷⁸ However, the fact that he was at the centre of a political struggle, and his obvious desire not to be in North America, must have impacted the decision not to reduce Placentia or anywhere else after the disaster. Hill was a capable commander, but after the rational decision not to progress with the original mission to Quebec, it was ultimately he who should be held responsible for returning to England. Hill’s instructions clearly gave him greater authority over the expedition than Walker and it was he who called both councils of war which abandoned Quebec and then Newfoundland.⁷⁹ He wanted to return home and a council of war was his method of doing this without attracting too much responsibility to himself, although King remarked that Hill ‘did all that was humanly possible to make it successful’.⁸⁰

Francis Parkman was extremely critical of both commanders, but he has been discredited.⁸¹ Owen thought that Walker ‘was no more a Saunders, however, than Hill was a Wolfe’.⁸² Matthew Bishop did not think likewise as his entertaining ‘memoirs’ declared: ‘there was not one officer but what was capable of performing everything he undertook. So their not having success ought not in the least to stain

⁷⁸ TNA, CO 5/898, King to St John, 25 July 1711, also in Graham, ‘The Walker Expedition to Quebec’, p. 315.

⁷⁹ Walker, ‘Journal’, p. 145, Hill to Walker, 5 September 1711; McLay, Keith Andrew John, ‘Combined Operations: British Naval and Military Co-operation in the Wars of 1688-1713’ (University of Glasgow PhD thesis, 2003), pp. 348-349.

⁸⁰ Graham, ‘The Walker Expedition to Quebec’, pp. 334-335, King to St John, 11 September 1711.

⁸¹ Parkman, Francis, *A Half-Century of Conflict*, (Boston, 1896), I, ch. VIII, *passim.*, was very critical of Walker and Hill, but whilst Parkman has written extensively on North America during the colonial period, he was a product of his own time. His Whiggish bias towards the progress of ‘Protestant Anglo-Saxon liberty’ is undeniable. ‘It is to be hoped that...Parkman’s works will be relegated to the same shelf as those of his contemporaries...where they will be consulted more by the student of American literature or historiography than by the student of history’, Eccles, W. J., ‘The History of New France According to Francis Parkman’, in Eccles, W. J., *Essays on New France*, (Toronto, 1987), p. 25.

⁸² Owen, *War at sea under Queen Anne*, p. 50.

their character; nor no one in justice can say there was any ill conduct'.⁸³ Walker was certainly not a great figure in naval history, but nor should he be remembered as a terrible incompetent. Owen was correct – Walker was not a Saunders, he was also not a Nelson, nor was he even a Rooke, Shovell or Leake. He was a good convoy commander – the sort of naval officer who remains in the background of history. Ironically, if it were not for the Quebec disaster, then Walker may have been long forgotten, because he was generally *successful* in what he did. He was not noted for his fighting prowess, but this was not necessarily a quality that was required for the missions he was given.

Amphibious and combined operations, particularly in the early eighteenth century, were an undeniably risky business that saw few successes and many disasters.⁸⁴ Rooke's attempt on Cadiz had failed in 1702, and Shovell and Prince Eugene were unable to cooperate effectively to capture Toulon in 1707. Three other descents planned against France ended in complete failure.⁸⁵ The storming of

⁸³ Bishop, Matthew, *The Life and Adventures of Matthew Bishop of Deddington in Oxfordshire*, (London, 1744), p. 255. Bishop has been widely used as a source by historians of the War of the Spanish Succession, but his adventures are too numerous to believe he existed. Some small details are incorrect, although this could be attributed to human memory as it was published over thirty years after the events described. He apparently served in the navy at the start of the war, at Cadiz, Gibraltar and Malaga, and then transferred to the army, coincidentally when there were fewer naval events worth talking about. He had also been made prisoner before escaping to face the French at Oudenaarde and Malplaquet. Bishop volunteered to join Kirk's regiment to Quebec after hearing of it in Flanders! If this was true then St John's obfuscation was completely pointless. Further errors are encountered, as he stated that he only volunteered because Marlborough had been relieved of his command, yet this did not happen until the following campaign. He also stated that the troops at Boston camped on Rhode Island (rather than Noddle's Island). The publisher's preface arouses suspicion as it lengthily strives to make the reader aware that it was not fiction, despite its appearance. Many of his accounts are clearly based in truth, however, and he must have consulted actual eyewitnesses. Atkinson errs in Bishop's favour, despite acknowledging the multitude of inaccuracies and the suspicious preface which was written in an age of 'literary forgeries', Atkinson, C. T., 'One of Marlborough's Men: Matthew Bishop of Webb's', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, vol. XXIII, (1945), pp. 158, 169.

⁸⁴ As Barnett imparts: 'no form of warfare is more difficult or more prone to confusions and failure than a seaborne expedition...English history is littered with the wrecks of combined operations launched in high hope', *Marlborough*, p. 48.

⁸⁵ The 1706 descent, which Hill accompanied, was very similar to Walker's expedition as 'the project ended in a fiasco, like most similar ones. The transports were delayed; the weather turned adverse; no soldiers even got near the French coast. Worst of all Marlborough never recovered the six regiments

Gibraltar in 1704 and the capture of Minorca in 1708 proved to be exceptions. However, comparisons with the 1711 expedition have also naturally been made with the success of Saunders and Wolfe in sailing to and capturing Quebec in 1759, yet this was the only time in history when Quebec had been successfully taken, with failed sieges occurring in 1690, 1760 and 1775-1776. The Seven Years War was unique and should not be comparable to events fifty years beforehand because pilots, provisions and better charts were available, whilst the colonies had developed to allow the execution of sustained operations in North America.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, Wolfe could easily have withdrawn in September 1759 after his initial failures, Murray could easily have capitulated in 1760 and it was only the logistical advantage offered by British supremacy of the seas that ensured a reversal of fortunes in Canada. If disaster had not occurred on the St Lawrence in 1711, then Walker would have arrived in Quebec at around the same time as it was finally captured forty-eight years later – just before Wolfe had to withdraw.

Walker's critics were correct in respect of his caution. When it came to convoying transports, this quality was no doubt desirable and it was only on the St Lawrence where he actually lost any vessels. This was, perhaps, why he was selected to lead such an expedition, and trusted again to sail to Jamaica. Caution was not desirable, however, when facing the enemy in battle at sea. Such wariness would become endemic in naval commanders to the point that Vice-Admiral John Byng was executed in 1756 for not defending Port Mahon by engaging with the enemy. It can

[including Hill's] detached for this expedition; subsequently, they went to Spain as reinforcements'. An operation against Sete on the Languedoc coast in 1707, 'proved to be a non-event. The unopposed landing force reembarked within a week having achieved nothing'. Whilst the famous Abbeville plan failed because the 'narrow, tortuous navigable channel, was unsuitable and the pilots refused to enter tidal waters' so the transports just sat off the coast. Jones, J. R., *Marlborough*, (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 128, 147, 164-165.

⁸⁶ Harding, 'The Expeditions to Quebec', p. 212.

be no coincidence that after this point, the Royal Navy of the Seven Years War began to enjoy huge success – commanders being afraid of the consequences of inaction. This conduct was even taken to the point of recklessness. Nevertheless this attitude won battles, such as Admiral Sir Edward Hawke’s pursuit of the French at Quiberon Bay (unconcerned by a lack of pilots) which would have been unthinkable during the War of the Spanish Succession.⁸⁷ Walker may have suffered in a later, more belligerent, era punctuated by increasingly frequent naval engagements, but he should not have been persecuted in his own time in a war which lasted a decade and only featured one major fleet battle. Sensible decisions were taken by him to reduce the scope of disaster.

Britain became the dominant naval power, as the Dutch struggled to maintain their prowess at sea and the French surrendered their capability in order to maintain their strong armies.⁸⁸ Britain was subsequently successful in asserting itself as a global power in the eighteenth-century world after it had established the essential foundations for doing so at Utrecht. A maturity in naval affairs had been attained which allowed massive British expansion in the proceeding century. Whereas Queen Anne’s navy attained dominance in a primarily transatlantic and Mediterranean sphere, this acted as a stepping-stone when, during the Seven Years War, it provided global superiority at sea. Lessons had been sufficiently learnt during this period for Britain to successfully capture far-flung outposts of opponents’ empires in

⁸⁷ Ireland, Bernard, *Naval Warfare in the Age of Sail: War at Sea, 1756-1815*, (London, 2001), pp. 20-21, 37-39; McLynn, Frank, *1759: The Year Britain Became Master of the World*, (London, 2008), chapter 11 *passim.*; Pocock, Tom, *Battle for Empire: The Very First World War, 1756-63*, (London, 1998), chapter 1 *passim.*, Ireland, Rodger, N. A. M., *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815*, (London, 2004), pp. 265-267, 282-283.

⁸⁸ Lambert, *War at Sea in the Age of Sail*, p. 107; Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, p. 105.

amphibious operations, such as those at Havana and Manila in 1762, and of course, Quebec.

The 1711 Quebec expedition should not be discounted as a failure unworthy of scholarly attention. It offers great insights into the politics of Queen Anne's reign, and is an example of how not to organise a combined operation, illustrating all of the problems which this included. Some unusual aspects are also involved, such as the simultaneous promotions to lieutenant of thirty men from the ranks and the brief enlistment of black men into the army at Boston. It was also the first serious attempt by the British to conquer New France. The force that was assembled under Hill was the largest regular military force that the North American colonies had ever seen, outnumbering the combined populations of the two capitals of Boston and Quebec. The immense efforts of the colonies to wage war against their neighbours, which brought the expedition to its shores, was an unprecedented military endeavour in that theatre of conflict and this shift to blue-water operations indicated a major alteration in British strategy for the rest of the century. The French, by neglecting their navy for too long, were powerless to stop the onslaught prompted by the desire of the English colonials to be rid of their northern adversaries. Phips' small expedition in 1690 demonstrated that they could not achieve this on their own, despite the disparity in population between New England and New France. To ensure success in both attack and defence, the resources and expertise of the mother country were required. In 1711 even that was not enough for the British. It needed the backing of the entire state to organise such an undertaking, rather than the narrow, secretive expertise of St John.

Secrecy was impossible in a world where communications were so slow and vulnerable to interception or surveillance; where a fleet, even in the vast Atlantic, cannot be hidden; nor the trampling of several thousand troops through tracts of forest be concealed. By the time of the Seven Years War, the process which had begun in 1711, and which was only unenthusiastic speculation during the War of the Austrian Succession, had become a clearly defined war aim. Walker's failure is not in itself important; it is the strategy that would evolve into British domination of North America, and the attitudes that would eventually see the secession of the Thirteen Colonies, already apparent when Walker arrived at Boston, which were to have such a great impact on the eighteenth century. Walker demonstrated the value of power projection on a scale that other societies were unable to replicate. Great Britain had shown that it was potentially capable of taking the battle to the enemy given the correct backing, expertise, planning and organisation. Maritime operations on such a scale began with Walker's expedition and ended with British domination of the extra-European world during the Seven Years War.

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